



**Training and Transitions:  
The Lived Experiences of Adult Learners  
of English as a Second (or Other) Language**

Suzanne Margaret Reszke

BMus(Perf) LRSM MEd

**Submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Faculty of Education  
University of Tasmania**

**November 2011**

## **Statement of Originality**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of the my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Statement of Authority of Access**

This thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance  
with the Copyright Act 1968.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Statement of Ethical Conduct**

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

## **Abstract**

This study endeavoured to explore and examine the lived experience of adults learning and using English as a second language within the context of an international charitable and humanitarian organization, and the significance of this for English language teaching pedagogy. The study has at its foundation principles of hermeneutic phenomenology and as such sought to understand what these experiences were like for the respondents.

Two clusters of participants contributed responses in different formats from different contexts within the international organization. At level one the 16 participants were working in multicultural teams with an international charitable and humanitarian organization in various locations around the world and contributed one off written responses to guiding questions. The 18 respondents at level two were studying English at an organizational training college in order to fulfil requirements for a standardised level of English proficiency, and took part in semi-structured interviews. Data analysis and interpretation utilised a combination of grounded theory and thematic analysis methods so as to discern themes arising from the data.

Findings from the study suggest that significant personal transformation is possible when adults learn English in a country and culture other than their own. Attitudes and approaches to English language learning undergo change as adults endeavour to participate in the target language community. Intercultural awareness and an increased understanding of the host culture develop as adults relate to those from other cultures in the new context. In their everyday routine experiences, English language learners and users experience changes to the self, particularly growth in self confidence and a sense of empowerment.

The changes brought about by the ESL experience also necessitate negotiation within existing relationships as families deal with separation from family members and establish routines in the host culture. The role of English within the family also

### *Abstract*

requires ongoing negotiation as contexts change. The role of the English language teacher can be regarded as crucial both in affecting good language learning experiences but also in facilitating learning that is transformative.

Within the international organization experiences of learning and using English have a temporal nature that is context dependent. For non-native speakers within the organization the role of English develops as proficiency develops however, fulfilling roles of additional responsibility creates additional pressure from the expectations both of the English language users themselves and from others.

The findings suggest that the participants in this study were motivated to learn English by a sense of vocation that also assisted them to maintain their English language learning and to persist in using English to fulfil their vocation through working with the international organization.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the following people who have made the completion of this thesis possible:

I am indebted to Dr Thao Lê, my primary supervisor and source of inspiration. Thank you, Thao for the many hours you have devoted to this thesis, for the encouragement you gave at every meeting and for challenging me to think widely.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my family, my husband Jerry and my daughters Phoebe and Bethany, for their unwavering support and understanding. Thank you also to my mother Patricia, for instilling in us the belief that we can accomplish anything to which we put our minds.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to the participants who gave their time so generously. I feel privileged to have shared their stories.

My thanks also to my colleagues at Migrant Education, Launceston for modelling dedication and commitment to learners. Thank you for generously sharing your knowledge and experience and for giving me a sense of belonging.

Many thanks also to my study colleagues in A-008 for sharing their academic and technological expertise with me and for making the journey so much more enjoyable.

## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

<b>EFL</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>EIL</b>	English as an International Language
<b>ELL</b>	English Language Learning/Learner
<b>ELT</b>	English Language Teaching
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>IELTS</b>	International English Language Testing System
<b>L1</b>	First language (mother tongue)
<b>L2</b>	Second Language
<b>LFC</b>	Lingua France Core
<b>NNSE</b>	Non-native Speaker/s of English
<b>NSE</b>	Native Speaker/s of English
<b>WCHO</b>	Worldwide Charitable and Humanitarian Organization
<b>WE</b>	World English/Englishes



## Table of Contents

<b>Statement of Originality</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Statement of Authority of Access</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Statement of Ethical Conduct</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Table of Figures</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>Table of Tables</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Background Leading to the Study</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1.1 Organizational context.	2
1.1.2 Motivation for research.	5
1.1.3 Justification for the study.	7
<b>1.2 Research Objectives</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.3 Research Methodology</b>	<b>9</b>
1.3.1 Qualitative research approaches.	9
1.3.2 Qualitative methods in this study.	11
<b>1.4 Significance of the Study</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.5 Limitations of the Study</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.6 Ethical Issues</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.7 Organization of the Thesis</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.8 Conclusion</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.9 Summary</b>	<b>17</b>

<b>Chapter Two: The Challenges of English Language Learning</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Challenges in Adult Second Language Learning	20
2.2 The “Good” Language Learner	25
2.3 Identity and Language Learning	27
2.4 Language Learning and Culture Stress	29
2.5 Significance for the Second Language Learner	32
2.6 Conclusion	34
2.7 Summary	35
<b>Chapter Three: Global Dimensions of English Language Pedagogy</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 English and Globalisation	36
3.2 Kachru’s Model of English Usage	38
3.3 English: A Global or an International Language?	39
3.4 Why English?	40
3.5 World Englishes	41
3.6 Difficulties and Disparities	42
3.7 The Role of the Native Speaker and the Bilingual Teacher of English	43
3.8 Standards of English	44
3.9 Pronunciation Models	45
3.10 Significance for English Language Teaching	46
3.11 Conclusion	48
3.12 Summary	49
<b>Chapter Four: Learning in Adulthood</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 Addressing the Place of Andragogy	53
4.2 Jarvis’s Model of Learning	56
4.3 Context in Learning	58
4.4 Learning that Transforms	60

<b>4.5 Adult Second Language Learning and Transformation</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>4.6 Fostering Transformation: Approaches for ELT</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>4.7 Individuation</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>4.8 The Role of Spirituality in Learning in Adulthood</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>4.9 Conclusion</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>4.10 Summary</b>	<b>75</b>
 <b>Chapter Five: Research Methodology</b>	 <b>77</b>
<b>5.1 Researcher Perspective</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>5.2 Research Objectives</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>5.3 Hermeneutic Phenomenology</b>	<b>82</b>
5.3.1 The development of Hermeneutics.	83
5.3.2 The development of Phenomenology.	85
5.3.3 Hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.	87
5.3.4 Hermeneutic phenomenology in this study.	88
<b>5.4 A Definition of <i>Text</i></b>	<b>90</b>
5.4.1 Text in this study.	92
<b>5.5 Research Methods in this Study</b>	<b>92</b>
5.5.1 Rationale for sample selection.	92
<b>5.6 Data Collection Methods</b>	<b>95</b>
5.6.1 Data collection via email.	95
5.6.2 Data collection via interview.	99
5.6.2.1 Interviews in this study	101
<b>5.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>5.8 Conclusion</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>5.9 Summary</b>	<b>106</b>
 <b>Chapter Six: Data Analysis</b>	 <b>107</b>
<b>6.1 Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>6.2 Data Collection and Analysis in this Study</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>6.3 Thematic Analysis in this Study</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>6.4 Grounded Theory in this Study</b>	<b>117</b>

<b>6.5 Combining Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory in this Study</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>6.6 Conclusion</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>6.7 Summary</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Chapter Seven: Results and Discussion</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>7.1. Theme One: Learning English Engenders Transformation</b>	<b>126</b>
7.1.1 Background to transformation.	127
7.1.2 Anticipating the ELL experience: motives and rationale for undertaking further ELL.	130
7.1.1.2 <i>Motivations for learning English in another country.</i>	131
7.1.2 Attitudes and approaches to language learning undergo transformation in the ELL process.	135
7.1.3 Transformation involves changes to self including increasing self confidence and sense of empowerment.	138
7.1.4 Transformation involves the development of intercultural awareness including increased understanding of the host culture.	141
<b>7.2 Theme Two: Studying and Using English Necessitates Negotiating Changes in Relationships</b>	<b>144</b>
7.2.1 Obtaining endorsement from the wider family to study overseas is of significance to the ELL.	144
7.2.2 Studying English overseas necessitates encountering and dealing with issues of separation.	146
7.2.3 Maintaining family life in the new cultural context requires negotiating changes in roles and responsibilities.	147
7.2.4 Determining the role of English within the family.	152
7.2.5 Relating to others utilising English generates contrasting emotions for the NNSE.	155
7.2.6 Relationships are a priority for English language learners.	158
7.2.7 Considering the NSE / NNSE relationship.	159
<b>7.3 Theme Three: Affective Factors are of Significance to the ELL</b>	<b>163</b>
7.3.1 Learn live language.	164
7.3.2 Learning English requires courage.	167
7.3.3 Learning English requires motivation, justification and perseverance.	168
<b>7.4 Theme Four: English Language Learning is Functionally Constructed and Goal Oriented</b>	<b>172</b>
7.4.1 English language learners have identifiable goals.	172
7.4.2 English language skills become utilitarian over time.	174
7.4.3 The NNSE functioning in roles of responsibility in an international organization experiences additional pressure from the language expectations of self and of others.	176
7.4.4 Learning English is a means of fulfilling vocation.	178
<b>7.5 Significance of the Findings for ELT Pedagogy</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>7.6 Conclusion</b>	<b>182</b>

<b>7.7 Summary</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Chapter Eight: Conclusion</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>8.1 Addressing the Research Objectives</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>8.2 Possibilities for Further Research</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>8.3 Reflecting on the Research Experience</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>Appendix A: Information Sheet</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>Appendix B: Consent Form</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Appendix C: Guiding Questions: Protocol Writing</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Appendix D: Interview Schedule</b>	<b>215</b>

## Table of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> The acculturation process (Zhou et al., 2008, p. 69) _____	<b>31</b>
<i>Figure 2.</i> Kachru's model of World English (Adapted by Chang, 2008. p. 4) _____	<b>38</b>
<i>Figure 3.</i> The transformation of the person through experience (Adapted from Jarvis, 2006, p. 16) _____	<b>57</b>
<i>Figure 4.</i> Sample selection _____	<b>94</b>
<i>Figure 5.</i> From data to texts: The data generation process summarised _____	<b>105</b>
<i>Figure 6.</i> Thematic Analysis process undertaken in this study _____	<b>115</b>
<i>Figure 7.</i> Grounded Theory process undertaken in this study _____	<b>118</b>
<i>Figure 8.</i> Categories of identification within COS _____	<b>161</b>
<i>Figure 9.</i> Possible Contexts of L1, local language and English language use in the country of service _____	<b>178</b>

## Table of Tables

<i>Table 1.</i> Thematic Analysis Theme 1: Learning English engenders transformation _____	<b>116</b>
<i>Table 2.</i> Thematic Analysis Theme 2: Studying ESL overseas necessitates negotiating changes in relationships _____	<b>117</b>
<i>Table 3.</i> Grounded theory code development in this study _____	<b>120</b>

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

This thesis presents research investigating the experiences of adults learning English as a second language to work with an international organization and the experiences of those who are non-native speakers of English (NNSE) already working with the organization. While there are many studies dealing with the “what and how” of language learning in terms of mastery of code, this project considers the “why and what does it mean”: why this group of adults learn and use English as a second language and their perceptions of the place of English in their everyday lives and what English means to them.

Learning and using a second language as an adult presents both opportunities and challenges: the opportunity to communicate with people from another culture where without English language proficiency this is not possible; the challenge of meeting the changes that undertaking such learning entails. Learning in any form as an adult is an individual and personal activity yet it affects the learner’s network of relationships with others and when learning is undertaken in a new cultural and linguistic context, the impact on the person and their relationships is heightened. This study is concerned with the routine everyday experiences of participants as they learned and utilised English which may to some seem unremarkable. However, the study has significance in raising awareness of the routine experiences and perceptions of adults learning and speaking English as a second language within the context of an international organization.

As an ESL educator teaching English as a second language to adults, the researcher’s motivation in undertaking this study was firstly to better comprehend the experiences of those coming to Australia, or travelling to other countries for a period of intensive English language study, so as to increase understanding and improve English language teaching (ELT) practice. As a member of the organization, the researcher’s motivation was also to examine the place of English in the lives of those NNSE working for the organization in different roles and in different contexts.



This introductory chapter presents the background to the study so as to clarify the context within which this research was conducted before progressing to subsequent chapters. The international organization is introduced and the policies implemented which are of importance to this study outlined, presenting the organizational context for this study. The researcher's motivation for conducting the research, the justification for conducting the study and the significance of this study are outlined. This chapter also introduces the research objectives and provides a description of the qualitative approach adopted for the study. The ethical issues involved in conducting this study are outlined before the chapter closes with the structural outline of the thesis.

### **1.1 Background Leading to the Study**

The focus of this investigation is the "lived experience" (van Manen, 1997, p. 9) of adults who are non-native speakers of English, either training to work with, or currently working with, a not for profit worldwide charitable and humanitarian organization (WCHO). The study considers the impact of learning English and the place of English in the lives of these people, their relationships with others, and the situations in which they work and live. According to the most current figures, approximately 972 people within the organization are from countries where English is not the dominant, first, or national language (International Office, 2007).

#### **1.1.1 Organizational context.**

Established in 1913 with its international office in England, the WCHO has approximately 2140 personnel from 51 nations working amongst 90 people groups around the world and national or regional centres (Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Latin America, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States of America) involved in administration, recruiting personnel and in training activities (International Office, 2007). The organization has non-denominational Christian foundations with organizational activities including humanitarian work amongst people with addictions, working with children at risk, production of informative and study materials for the public, and research into areas of interest internationally. The WCHO has five training facilities located in Brazil, the Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand and Australia offering a range of courses,

primarily for those interested in working with the organization or in related fields. At the time of the data collection three of the five training facilities were offering formal ESL courses, and all were providing access to assistance with English of some form for students from NNSE backgrounds.

Working in multicultural teams, the organization adopted a policy of internationalisation in 1961 with discussion continuing on what this involves in contemporary circumstances and an ongoing process of implementation (Kuhl, 1996). This policy is reflected in the Core Values of the organization which include the following:

- We accept each other irrespective of gender, ethnic background ...
- We desire to work in multinational teams and are committed to effective international co-operation
- We believe in full participation and oneness in decision making
- We promote local and innovative strategies through decentralised decision-making. (International Office, 2005, p. 30)

To facilitate the effective functioning of the teams English is the lingua franca of the organization, all personnel from non-English speaking backgrounds being required to demonstrate a minimum English language level, currently in the form of an IELTS General Training overall band 5.5, or equivalent, from an official testing centre. In 2008 a conference of international leaders established a working group to discuss English language learning within the organization as this topic was “of great relevancy and urgency given the increasingly multicultural nature” of the WCHO (International Office, 2008, p. 23). The conference affirmed the necessity for those working with the organisation to have an adequate level of English to facilitate communication at three levels: between personnel for mutual friendship and companionship; as a team for interaction in meetings and discussion related to work issues; for those in leadership roles to relate regionally and internationally (International Office, 2008, p. 23).

Two groups of participants contributed responses for this study, all of whom were from backgrounds where English is not their first language or mother tongue (L1). For the purposes of this study, the term non-native speaker of English (NNSE) will

be used to indicate both those undertaking formal English language learning and those who have completed their official English language-learning period, all participants in the study having attained the required minimum level of English language proficiency. Participants contributed responses at level one were working with the WCHO in different countries, their countries of service (COS), at the time of the study, fulfilling a variety of roles in varied contexts. Their responses in a written format and were returned to the researcher via email. At the time of the study the second group of participants were enrolled in an English language course at the organization's Australian training centre hoping to fulfil the minimum English requirements, and were planning to join the WCHO to work in a COS in the near future. These respondents participated in face to face interviews conducted by researcher at the training centre.

Discussion has been renewed among members within the WCHO in articles published recently in a member generated magazine concerning the requirement of a prescribed level of English before joining the organization. One contributor commented on watching those from a particular country aiming to become members "literally grow old learning English" while the English speakers within the organization "cheerfully impose years of English language learning" (Internal organization magazine, 2007a, p. 1) on people from NNSE backgrounds. In the following issue a contributor, who is a non-native speaker of English, conveyed a number of insights from personal experience: that language learning within the country of service was through books and dictionaries written in English; that learning English before joining the organization provides a measure of language aptitude and attitudes; that English is the most commonly studied second language worldwide; and that being able to communicate in English provides other opportunities (Internal organization magazine, 2007b, p. 1). Another contributor responded that the focus of the policy is to enable communication and, where team members do not have adequate English proficiency, misunderstandings have occurred and individuals have been limited in the roles that they can fulfil (Internal organization magazine, 2007b).

The most rapid growth in terms of recruitment of personnel within the organization has, in recent times, been in countries where English is not the national language,

particularly countries in the Asian region, which experienced an annual growth between 2004-2006 of 17.89 %, and Latin America, which experienced an annual growth of 12.20% during the same period (International Office, 2007, p. 8). Given that all personnel working with the organization are volunteers rather than employees, economic and time constraints are a major factor for those considering some form of English language study to reach the minimum requirements. This has led to expressions of frustration from the non-English speaking national centres about the amount of time it takes to learn English, the expense for personnel, and the difficulties of finding courses for those at beginner level (International Office, 2006).

### **1.1.2 Motivation for research.**

The organizational context discussed above prompted the researcher to consider the impact of policies of the WCHO upon the organizational experiences of non-native speakers of English (NNSE). According to organizational documents, the WCHO functions in English to facilitate “meaningful fellowship and aid corporate decision-making” (International Office, 2002, p. 5) and to enable those whose first language is not English to participate in leadership. However, the organization acknowledges that using English as a lingua franca internationally puts some at a disadvantage in contexts where English is used. The need for acceptance of differences in pronunciation and word choice has been highlighted as has the necessity of creating a non-threatening environment to encourage participation in discussions (International Office, 2002).

As a full-time volunteer with the WCHO teaching English as a second language to adults at their registered training centre in Australia, the researcher was closely involved with the experiences of the many people working towards achieving the prerequisite English level to work for the WCHO. All participants involved in the study were full-time volunteer workers with, or training to work with, the WCHO. The experience of learning English in a country other than one’s own presents many challenges and the researcher became aware of the everyday impact that learning English had on individual adults, their families and their social networks. For some, participating in English language learning courses involves an extended period of absence from normal networks of support, the considerable expense involved in travelling to and living in another country for an extended period of time, and

adjusting to another culture. Many challenges face these people and the researcher sought to discover the reverberations for those involved, whether financial, physical, social or psychological. The researcher was also deeply interested in how NNSE in the organization maintained their commitment to the process of learning and using English as adults despite the many other pressures in their lives.

The researcher also reflected on her own involvement as an ESL teacher in the process that these people undergo to join the WCHO. Having personally enjoyed positive experiences of learning a second language as an adult, the researcher regarded the language learning process as one of growth, of expansion as a person rather than surrendering or a losing any aspect of identity. In learning another language, the researcher found that a layer of identity was developed that functioned well in the country of service (COS) and in the major language used in the society. The joy of being able to communicate with others where once it had not been possible was the reward, and the researcher's language learning experiences continued to be positive throughout the time period spent in the country, strongly influencing the attitudes still maintained towards second language learning as an adult and methods of teaching the researcher uses currently. These observations led to the development of a deep interest in the English language learning experiences of others which motivated a number of questions: in the lives of those involved, how did such changes impact on their everyday experiences, particularly as the majority of those studying knew at some time in the future they would be required to learn another language in the country they would eventually live and work? What was the essence of the second language learner/user experience for them (van Manen, 1997)?

For those NNSE who have made the transition to their COS or who are working with the WCHO in leadership roles, this study endeavours to discover their lived experiences of utilising English, the contexts in which they employ their English language skills, the place and impact of learning and using English on their social networks, and their attitudes towards using English in their work and social contexts. How do the experiences of learning and using English impact their organizational praxis? What is it like to be a non-native speaker of English working with this organization?

### **1.1.3 Justification for the study.**

It is timely to examine the perceptions and experiences of adult English language learners and users within this international organization as all aspects of training within the organization are regularly reviewed and recently new directions in training have emerged. To the knowledge of the researcher, this study is the first to focus on the experiences of NNSE within the WCHO, and the first to present the voices of those who encounter these experiences in their day-to-day life. In a sense, the language learning experiences of NNSE within the organization have been largely unheard as an adequate level of English as regulated by policymakers is required to work with the organization yet the wider significance of this for non-native speakers of English at different stages in their organisational experiences has not been considered in any detailed study to date.

As the title indicates, the thesis considers the lived experience of adults, with all respondents considered adults, as defined by having reached adulthood whether legally by virtue of their ages, through assuming adult roles and responsibilities such as marriage, family or work, or having internalised “adult values and attitudes” (Taylor, Marienau & Fiddler, 2000, p. 21). The term English as a second language will be used to clearly indicate the context of the study; that learners have lived or are living in an English speaking environment to learn the language, to integrate into the environment or to participate in organizational discourses even though a number of the respondents were multilingual. This reflects contemporary society, where increasingly people function as multilinguals from childhood, with two or more languages and cultural norms (Koven, 1998; Thornbury, 2006). This was also the experience of many of the families represented by the respondents in this study; they themselves had a multilingual background or their children were growing up in a multilingual context, with English one language amongst others used. There were those, however, for whom English is literally the second language that they have studied and used to any great extent.

This study is located within the constructivist epistemology and has as its philosophical foundations hermeneutic phenomenology. For the researcher as an educator working with adults and a language teaching practitioner, this approach was chosen as hermeneutic phenomenology encourages, what van Manen (1997)

describes as, thoughtful awareness of what can seem mundane or trivial. This thoughtfulness impacted directly upon the researcher as an educator, deepening understanding of learner experiences, increasing insight and knowledge, and assisting the development of a “critical pedagogic competence: knowing how to act tactfully” (van Manen, 1997, p. 8) in adult learning contexts in general and in the context of adult second language learning in particular. In undertaking this study the researcher aimed to improve both scholarship and practice, and to see a resulting improvement in learning for the adult learners with whom she has involvement. The researcher’s intention has been to respectfully approach the experience of others and to let their stories be told and heard. Throughout the study the researcher chose to use the term people or person, participant or respondent rather than individual or subject to reflect the regard in hermeneutic phenomenology for the “uniqueness of each human being” (van Manen, 1997, p. 6) and the stories and insights they shared provided the data from which the study drew texts for interpretation.

The research methods utilised in the study have been chosen as the researcher is motivated by the conviction that improvements to training, interpersonal, and intercultural understanding within the WCHO begins with conversations with those involved in the experiences. It is essential that personnel who do not regard English as their first language participate in the dialogue and that their subjective experiences, their insights and their perceptions are valued.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

Based on the abovementioned background to the study, the three research objectives established upon which this study was constructed were:

- to examine the lived experience of personnel within an international organization who use English as their second or additional language;
- to explore the routine experiences of adult learners and users of English as a second or additional language; and
- to consider the significance of the findings for ELT pedagogy.

To accomplish these objectives, data collected were regarded as texts and interpreted in five discourses:

- Training: the discourse of English language learning

- Transitions: the discourse of the newcomer
- Belonging: the discourse of home
- Moving On: the discourse of leadership
- Global Networking: the discourse of an international organization.

The term discourse has been used in this study in preference to theme or topic as it accurately indicates the dynamic nature of participant responses and recognizes the importance of language as social action (Wetherell, 2001). In considering the data by discourse, the study reflects the regard in discourse analysis for language as constructive and constitutive, bringing “social worlds into being” (Wetherell, 2001, p. 16) rather than as a passive medium.

### **1.3 Research Methodology**

It is clear from the background to the study and the justification for the study outlined in the preceding sections that qualitative approaches to research align with the rationale and philosophical assumptions upon which the research was based. There are three main influences on the research that was undertaken: firstly the philosophical approach to participants and data collection methods of hermeneutic phenomenology to describe and interpret lived experience; the utilisation of thematic analysis to “make sense” of the descriptive data generated; and the application of grounded theory principles to direct the data towards theory development. Locating this study in its research context will be achieved by presenting a general description of qualitative research in the sections following.

#### **1.3.1 Qualitative research approaches.**

Dissatisfaction with traditional research methods, that seemed inappropriate for reflecting the intricacies of human behaviour and social experiences, led to the development of qualitative research with techniques finally formalised in the 1990s. Qualitative methods were first developed in ethnography, with its emphasis on studying people in their own environment, but are now used in most social sciences. Researchers in education in general and language education in particular have found qualitative methodologies provide the means to investigate the “chaotic, complex and



unpredictable world” (Glicken, 2003, p. 7) in which we live and the interactions that life involves.

Qualitative research attempts to find the layered perspectives of reality and “places stress on the validity of multiple meaning structures and holistic analysis” (Burns, 1994, p. 11), holistic here implying that the actions of the individual are viewed within the context as a whole and cannot be understood apart from it. Based on the importance of the subjective experience of human beings, this approach attempts to “capture life as it is lived” (Boeree, 1998, p. 2), and is inductive in nature, with reflection an essential element. Hatch (2002, p. 6) notes the importance to qualitative researchers of “real people in real settings” and the importance of giving voice to the perspectives of informants, also observing the significance of the researcher, who, as another human being, is able to “make sense of the actions, intentions, and understandings” of participants (Hatch, p. 7).

Rather than finding causes for behaviour, qualitative research attempts to comprehend single events or phenomena as those inside regard them, and to observe the complexities of the setting without making judgements. To achieve this, the researcher develops a close connection with the participants in the setting as it occurs naturally (naturalism or naturalistic research), without any control of variables, yet remaining detached and without intervening (Bailey, 1998). This enables researchers to obtain comprehensive data from the individuals and interactions within the setting, with the thorough nature of the data collected intended to help preclude influence from the researchers’ own biases (Bailey, 1998; Burns, 1994).

Many different forms of qualitative research are employed and often overlap, allowing a flexibility of research design. Observation and interview are the major techniques of qualitative research, with the findings or theories growing from the setting rather than from academic postulation (McBride & Shostak, 1995). Methods used in qualitative research include case study, biography, phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography, conversation analysis, discourse analysis, narrative, and life history. Data collection methods include case studies, conversation and discourse analysis, diaries, interviews, questionnaires, and observations or field research. Interview strategies in qualitative research involve

open-ended questions that encourage participants to explain their perspectives, at times with questions suited to the context created during the process.

Qualitative data collection methods can be undertaken to determine general patterns on which to base theories, which can subsequently be tested using quantitative methods as necessary (Glicken, 2003). Data analysed can be in the form of words, pictures (such as videos), or objects (such as artefacts), or a combination of methods, and can be oriented in the past, present or future (Neill, 2004). In the literature, it is acknowledged that cause-effect relationships and generalisation to other people or situations are generally not envisaged or at times even possible in all qualitative studies.

### **1.3.2 Qualitative methods in this study**

O’Leary (2004) presents three prerequisites for methodological design: the methodology must address the question; be within your capacity; be practical and “doable”. The methodology chosen for this study responds to these three prerequisites but also took into account what would be appropriate for the organizational context in which the study was conducted.

In order to achieve the research objectives of this study, a mixed methods approach was appropriate, with the foundation of the study in hermeneutic phenomenology reflected in the choice of data collection and analysis methods. Data collection methods developed for this study were on two levels: level one involved protocol writing, “one off” texts in response to a set of guiding questions (Appendix C); level two involved semi-structured interviews employing an interview with guiding and prompt questions (Appendix D). To analyse the qualitative data gathered, a combination of grounded theory and thematic analysis methods were employed in this study, providing a thorough and systematic approach to the data while maintaining an orientation to the original texts generated.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is founded in a constructivist approach to research. In the constructivist epistemology, objective reality is not denied but rather both reality and knowledge are regarded as constructed socially through interaction within contexts and social practices (Taylor et al., 2000; McKenzie & Knipe, 2006). These

individual “perspectives or constructions of reality” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15) are the objects of enquiry with participants closely involved in the process. In describing the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, Van der Mescht (2004) observes that it is the meaning that others make of experiences and objects with its “embeddedness in cultural political and historical contexts” (p. 2) that is central to enquiry and a constructivist perspective. In constructivist research, patterns are ascertained using qualitative or a mixed methods approach with Hatch (2002) commenting that, “Accounts include enough contextual detail and sufficient representation of the voices of the participants that readers can place themselves in the shoes of the participants at some level” (p. 16). It is hoped that through conducting this research project, the reader will be able to gain some understanding of the experiences of the participants learning and using English within the WCHO.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

In conducting this study, it was anticipated all major stakeholders, namely the WCHO as an organization, those with responsibilities for teaching ESL, the organization’s training centres, the participants themselves, and the researcher, would benefit from a knowledge of the findings. It is anticipated that an awareness of the experiences of those learning and using English as a second language will offer “plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world” (van Manen, 1997, p. 9) of the adults concerned.

An accurate and informed understanding, drawn directly from analysis and interpretation of the data collected (the personal experiences of those people impacted by policy regarding NNSE), will have significance for personnel at individual, team, and international levels. As the organization considers changes to policy on English language requirements, it is hoped that by providing an opportunity for a group of people who have been directly impacted by the policies of the WCHO to reflect on their experiences and share their insights, a greater perceptiveness will result. Whether confirming previously held assumptions or contradicting them, the significance of this study will be in any contribution to the acumen of team members and a corresponding increase in sensitivity to the challenges faced by personnel using English as their second language.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The aim of this study is to present the lived experiences of those adults working with, or training to work with, the international organization; the study does not aim to make recommendations to the WCHO. For this reason, organizational documents will not be considered in any further detail. The study does aim to give a voice to those NNSE involved in the organization at different levels, whether in training, recently arrived at their country of service, or functioning in leadership roles.

For the purposes of this study personal details such as age, gender or ethnic origin were not collected and not considered necessary, however, volunteers must be over 18 years of age to work with the organization. Future studies may look in more detail at these other aspects of the NNSE's organizational experience; the aim of this thesis is to discover the overall experiences of participants as people regardless of age, ethnicity or gender. It is acknowledged that findings from the qualitative data collected are not generalisable to other adult ESL teaching and learning contexts, but that the results may be directly applicable to the organizational context and it is hoped that the results may promote further thoughtful discussion within the WCHO. It is also anticipated that issues of significance derived from analysis of the data may be applicable for ELT in general.

### **1.6 Ethical Issues**

This study was conducted with approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee, University of Tasmania, in compliance with the guidelines for minimal risk research (Ethics Reference No: H9046). While any potential risks to participants were considered minimal, a number of ethical issues were considered before undertaking this study.

Although every effort was made to minimise any potential risks, van Manen (1997) notes that reflection on experiences may cause some participants to feel a degree of discomfort or anxiety, particularly if there are aspects that could reflect negatively on others involved. If not conducted well, it is also possible that interviews may lead participants to feelings of anger or guilt. Participants were asked not to identify any individuals they were referring to by name to avoid identification of people within the organization that may have been known to the researcher.

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary and interview participants were reminded that they could stop at any time and that they were free to choose to leave unanswered any question they preferred not to answer. All aspects of the study were pre-tested, not only to ensure accuracy of instructions and the practical issues involved, but to ensure that questions were worded in a clear and sensitive manner. Confidentiality was assured and anonymity of responses maintained through the de-identification of any data through assigning a code for each participant response. Individuals participating in level one had the option of remaining anonymous by returning responses via the postal system and no identifying personal information was collected.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This study of the lived experiences of adult learners of English as a second language is presented in seven subsequent chapters. A review of the literature will be presented in three chapters, chapters two, three and four, that reflect the three discourses, namely second language learning, English language pedagogy and learning in adulthood, at the convergence of which this study is located.

The literature review provides the theoretical foundation for the study in that the key ideas and issues of significance to the study are presented to establish the context in which the study is situated. Traditionally the literature review is generally presented as one chapter, however, rather than taking a single chapter to discuss the literature from three discourses, each is addressed separately for the literature review in this study. This ensures clarity for the reader and maintains focus on significant issues within each discourse considered. However, these distinct dimensions are integrated in the lived experiences of the participants and as such integral issues are connected. In this thesis, issues raised in one section will be revisited in others so as to emphasise these connections for the reader.

**Chapter two: The challenging nature of second language learning.** A review of the literature commences with an overview of the relevant issues in second language learning pertaining to the adult experience, including the profile of a good language learner, the influence of language learning on identity and issues of culture stress

confronting learners who study in a new cultural context. These issues have particular relevance for the respondents in this study as they negotiate the pressures of culture stress and its affect on their language learning and their families.

**Chapter three: Global dimensions of English language pedagogy.** This chapter focuses on the global impact of the spread of English, presenting a discussion of issues relating to the development of English as an international or global language and the recognition of world Englishes and the significance of these developments for English language pedagogy generally. Current thinking on standards of English and a consideration of pronunciation models are of direct relevance to the participants as they were preparing to utilise or were actively using English in global contexts at the time of the study. However, these issues are of increasing concern to those involved in policy development regarding English language requirements for the WCHO and for those developing courses to meet organisational requirements as they evolve in the future.

**Chapter four: Learning in adulthood.** Theories of learning in adulthood of particular relevance to this study including the place of Knowles' theory of andragogy and Jarvis's model of learning are discussed in this chapter. The particular importance of context in learning is addressed before the chapter continues with consideration of the transformation that is possible when adults learn and the significance of this for ELT. This is then related to the process of individuation and the place of spirituality in learning, presenting not only a wider and more holistic perspective from which the experiences of the participants in this study can be viewed but also insights into those experiences that are gained from other discourses.

**Chapter five: Research methodology.** A detailed discussion of the research methods utilised for in this study follows in chapter five, commencing with a detailed description of the researcher perspective and of the research objectives. The origins, development and merging of hermeneutics and phenomenology are outlined including a description of the concept of lived experience, a concept central to hermeneutic phenomenology and consequently central to this study. Also central to this study also is the notion of "text" in qualitative methods and how text is considered in this study, both of which are detailed in this chapter. This is followed

by a section outlining the rationale for the selection of participants for this study before data collection methods utilised are outlined. An overview of the methods of data analysis and interpretation completes the chapter.

**Chapter six: Data analysis and interpretation.** Chapter six presents the methods of data analysis employed for this study presented in detail. As both thematic analysis and grounded theory methods of analysis were utilised, these are discussed individually before the manner in which the two methods were combined and implemented in this study is explicated. The methods of data collection utilised in the study are also detailed.

**Chapter seven: Results and discussion.** The results from analysis of the data are presented in four overall themes with subthemes providing further details. Discussion of the themes arising is also supported with reference to the literature reviewed in chapters 2-4. The significance of the findings for pedagogy is also discussed.

**Chapter eight: Conclusion.** In the eighth and final chapter, the thesis will be concluded by explicating the connections between the research objectives and the research findings, addressing the three research objectives in turn. Possibilities for areas that require further research are presented and concluding reflections on the research process draw the thesis to its close.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

In the life of every person, time is a precious commodity and for every adult, committing time to priorities and to matters of substance is essential as there are inevitably many demands in our lives that draw on our time. Those who participated in this study have been prepared to devote a significant portion of their time to learning English. As a teacher, the researcher has been given the opportunity to discover how the time devoted to language learning is perceived by those involved. As a native speaker of English, the researcher can comprehend the English language learning experiences of others only as they are shared and the research process has presented opportunities for this to occur. Books have to be read in order to discover

what they contain and in a similar way experiences have to be shared for us to discern what they have meant to others.

The roles of researcher and teacher are interconnected, even complementary. As a teacher of adults, one becomes aware that learners are people encountered en route in their own journey having already come some distance; the encounter leaves its impressions on both. The research process has provided the occasion to explore the lived experiences of those learning and using English yet their lived experiences also become reflected in my own as our stories become entwined for a time. In undertaking this study the researcher has been challenged and stretched to the fullest in exploring issues that are of consequence both personally and to others and in bringing these together in a text that has meaning for others. As an English language teacher, witnessing the changes in people that the process of language learning wrought is absorbing and this study provides an avenue to explore these in depth.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter has provided an introduction to the study and the context in which it has been conducted. The introduction has provided the following details:

- the organizational context including an introduction to the participants and to the researcher;
- a description of the qualitative research methods generally;
- an introduction to the methods that were adopted for this study;
- the significance and limitations of the study;
- ethical issues encountered in undertaking the study; and
- an overview of the organization of the thesis.

The chapter that follows is the first of three that form the literature review, as indicated in the section outlining the organisation of the thesis. Chapter two begins the review of the literature within which this study is positioned and which informs this study, focussing on the challenges of English language learning.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The Challenges of English Language Learning**

The literature examined for this thesis spans a number of discourses which will be addressed in turn as separate chapters in this review to ensure clarity for the reader, as previously stated. However, these divisions are somewhat artificial as human experience and the experiences of the participants in the study cannot be divided into neat sections, but experienced as a connected whole. This literature review begins with a discussion of adult second language learning as a specific context of learning in adulthood with its affects on identity, in particular that of culture stress which is of relevance to the participants in this study who have experienced life and learning in a culture other than their own. The focus of the subsequent chapter is the place of English and English language teaching (ELT) in a worldwide sense either as a global or international language and the ensuing investigation into world Englishes with a consideration of the standards of English including pronunciation models and the significance of these for ELT and learning. Chapter four concludes the review of the literature by addressing the discourse of learning in adulthood as it relates to this study, its relationship to adult second language learning and the process of personal development or individuation.

In considering the lived experiences of those who learn and use English as a second language, this study sits at the confluence of a number of discourses. The participants in this study were either studying English in preparation for working with or currently engaged in work for the WCHO in international and multi-cultural contexts globally, and consequently the discourses of adult and transformative learning, cultural studies, second language learning and teaching, and the current debate in the area of English as a world or global language and World Englishes provide a background that enlightens this study. The literature and the extant research from these discourses pertaining to the adult learner and the adult second language learner are examined in this and the following two chapters to present general insights upon which the study builds.

The purpose of this literature review is to position this study within the context of the literature that has informed it. The literature review will present and discuss the major concepts, models and existing theories from the discourses that have had influence on this project, namely the discourse of adult learning, second language learning and teaching, and investigations into the relationship between identity and language learning. It was to these discourses and theories that the researcher turned to develop insight into the phenomenon and answers to questions that were posed. The literature consulted and presented stimulated the researcher's thoughts and alerted her to the issues that were likely to be of importance. The material selected for discussion in the literature review was chosen for its relevancy to the study, its currency and reliability with classic texts consulted to present a historical perspective. The relationship of the literature to the study will be further elucidated with reference to particular theories and concepts addressed in turn as the literature review progresses. The three chapters present a dialogue with the key ideas in each discourse and their relevance in providing the context for the thesis.

The review of the literature commences with an examination of relevant monographs, professional journals and extant research from the second language learning and teaching discourse as these were areas of primary interest for the thesis, followed by a survey of the literature pertaining to learning in adulthood. Links between language learning and learning in adulthood were then explored, with particular reference to transformative learning, to establish adult second language learning in its wider context. Also consulted was the literature available on qualitative research methodology and methods of qualitative data analysis so as to establish methods that would be most appropriate for the study. The literature was reviewed in a continuous process, beginning in the initial stage of the research project, then concurrently with the data collection and analysis stages, and continued subsequent to data analysis. As the review progressed and data collection proceeded, connections were ascertained between discourses, themes within those discourses under consideration in the literature review and data collected, leading the study in directions that had not previously been considered. A return to the literature was required during the writing of the discussion and conclusion chapter as concepts were drawn together.

An examination of the literature relating to the discourse of adult learning as it applies to this study follows so as to present the wider context in which the study is positioned and which gives further understanding of the experiences of the participants in the study. Major concepts covered in this chapter are the current concern with context in adult learning and the place of andragogy which offers some historical insights that continue to influence the discourse.

## **2.1 Challenges in Adult Second Language Learning**

This section will examine aspects of second language learning related to the challenges faced by adult learners specifically addressing learners' strategies, the impacts of language learning on identity, the concerns of culture stress in language learning, and the consequences for the second language learner.

Although all participants in this study had learned English to some extent in their school years, their experiences as adult learners of English is the focus of this thesis. Returning to a formal learning situation in the adult years involves its own changes and challenges as assumptions that adult learners hold about themselves, their capabilities and their perceptions of themselves as learners come under examination. In any classroom situation, there are also diverse dynamics, such as cultural influences and the perception of competition, which affect the experience of the adult learners.

It is well documented in the literature that returning to a formal learning context can trigger memories of past, at times unpleasant, learning experiences which may have impacted life choices. Willans and Seary (2007) mention adult learners' "assumptions related specifically to perceptions of intelligence, the fear of being ridiculed and hurt, and a perceived inability to succeed in a formal learning context" (p. 435). In the ESL classroom, as in any adult teaching and learning context, learners' prior experiences of second language learning in general, or English language learning specifically, can facilitate the learning process but, where negative assumptions are held, experience can also become an impediment to the language learning process or a hurdle to overcome, as affirmed by Foster (1997):

Regardless of their motivation, most learners have a personal history with language learning that they carry with them from earlier years. Memories of their past experiences remain vivid. When the memory is positive, it can provide a familiar base upon which to build. When the memory is negative or even traumatic, however, the decision to return to language study can fill these learners with unease, anxiety or fear. (p. 33)

Furthermore, the second language classroom, whether in the home country or in a host culture, has its own unique challenges to the self, perhaps more so than any other discipline. Unlike other subject areas where learners can articulate their difficulties without restraint, second language learners are “personally implicated in the acquisition of the subject matter, or the technical skills of the language. As soon as learners embark on acquiring the basics of a language, they are also required to communicate” (Foster, 1997, p. 35), and this communication takes place in front of their peers. Foster (1997) comments that, “Perhaps no other discipline influences self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language studies do” (p. 36) stating also that language difficulties can undermine the sense of identity of the learner in a way that other subject areas do not.

A facet of language acquisition and one that is considered to be essential in becoming a successful language learner is the willingness to take risks; to actively use the language when presented with opportunities to do so (Brown, 2000). However, actively using the language is a complex process involving both understanding the content of the language and the delivery of the message in a manner that is understandable to others, requiring choice of appropriate vocabulary and clear pronunciation. In the early stages of language learning particularly, this entails learners becoming vulnerable as, “almost any effort in the target language undermines the learner’s self-concept as a competent communicator” (Foster, 1997, p. 35). The interlocutor is fully responsible for the speech act, there is no mediator, and consequently the self is left vulnerable. Adults who have functioned well in their first language and held responsibilities in their families, workplaces and communities, find their ability to function independently in the new culture severely restricted, and as Storti (2001) describes, “Feeling like a schoolboy does little to boost the expat’s self-esteem and self-confidence, two more casualties of being

unable to speak the local language” (p. 99). This can be compounded when attitudes of locals in the host culture, who do not understand the learners’ circumstances, are less than helpful. Foster (1997) describes the challenges these experiences can present to the language learner:

The intermediate interaction with the language and culture can directly threaten an individual’s self-concept and worldview. Learners typically perceive themselves to be reasonably intelligent, socially adept individuals who are sensitive to different social mores. Such personal assumptions are rarely challenged when individuals are communicating in their native language, simply because it is not so difficult to make oneself understood or to understand others. Learning another language is markedly different.  
(p. 35)

This is illustrated by participants in Tsui’s (1996) study of secondary school ESL teachers who commented that students did not respond to teacher questions due to fear of being laughed at, fear of losing face if they gave the wrong answer, fear that their answers would not satisfy the teacher, and a reticence to answer unless they had the right answer. Foster (1997) also comments that “the typical reaction is one of reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic” (p. 35). When these anxieties continue into the adult language learning experience they produce difficulties for the learner, particularly when learning in a context that is not familiar, such as in a new country with its own, possibly divergent, expectations of the learner. Tsui (1996) notes that in an ESL classroom learners are “constantly putting themselves in a vulnerable position of having their own self-concept undermined and subjecting themselves to negative evaluations” (p. 155), which is reflected in feelings of anxiety.

Language anxiety is identifiable as a specific anxiety associated with second language learning and recognised as such in the literature. It involves feelings of “tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (Tanveer 2007, p. 4). Tanveer (2007) notes that speaking in English provokes the most concern and contributing factors to language anxiety are a lack of input and lack of practice in social contexts. Any situation in which the language learner is placed and feels they may reveal weakness or deficiencies will

cause anxiety, Tanveer (2007) commenting that, “Anxiety has also been found to be exacerbated by students’ feelings of low proficiency or lack of confidence in general linguistic knowledge, the evidence of which students do not want to display” (p. 61). These feelings are exacerbated in the classroom when “the language instructor’s manner of error correction is rigid and humiliating” (Tanveer, 2007, p. 61). Contributing factors to language anxiety may be an uncertainty about context in which language learning or usage takes place; social factors that trigger the “predisposition among some people to experience such anxiety because of their own concerns about ethnicity, foreignness, and the like” (Tanveer, 2007, p. 5). The target language is also intrinsically entwined with the community it represents with anxiety caused by insecurity when negotiating the new cultural rules, an unequal social status where the language learner feels inferior to the interlocutor, or where the learner’s self image may be compromised (Tanveer, 2007, p. 62). Manifestations of language anxiety noted by Tanveer (2007) include “behavioural changes such as engaging in negative self-talk and ruminating over poor performance ... and having unrealistic high performance standards” (p. 29). Brown (2000) categorises three performance related components of language anxiety: communication anxiety; fear of negative social evaluation; and test anxiety. Although deep levels of anxiety can be debilitating, some level of anxiety, Brown (2000) employing the term *facilitative anxiety*, can enable individuals to perform to a higher level or to put more effort into the task at hand.

The role of the teacher in reducing language anxiety is considered vital. Tanveer (2007) presents recommendations for ELT to assist teachers in helping learners overcome language anxiety and deal with “the potentially pervasive and detrimental effect of language anxiety” (p. 65). Teacher understanding of the phenomenon of language anxiety is important so that where learners are struggling with this it can be identified and support provided. Tanveer (2007) notes the importance of the teacher understanding some aspects of the learners’ individual cultural backgrounds and prior second language learning experiences. To counter anxiety produced by previous language learning experiences Tanveer recommends providing opportunities to practise speaking through implementing “a truly communicative approach” (2007, p. 63) in a supportive environment where learners feel comfortable. Development of a classroom environment where learners recognise the importance

of making mistakes in the process of developing skills, where the perception of competition between learners is reduced, and where reasonable expectations and performance standards are given will assist learners overcome erroneous beliefs about the language learning process. Classroom discussion on the topic of language anxiety also develops learner awareness of the phenomenon.

It is also recognised that restricted language skills in the L2 limit the extent to which the self can be expressed; there is a “disparity between who they know themselves to be and how they represent themselves in the classroom” (Foster, 1997, p. 36). They are constrained in how much of the genuine self they can convey, as Foster observes, “There is unmistakeable disparity between the ‘true’ self and the limited self as revealed in the second language” (p. 35). Although communication and interaction with people in the target language may be possible on some level, for the language learner, the self may not be fully expressed in the target language as Storti (2001) comments:

On a deeper level, if you can’t communicate your ideas and opinions to people, how can they know who you are? And if you can’t understand others, how can you know them? ...Not truly knowing others, not feeling you are known by them, you feel alone and isolated... Language is the primary means of self-expression; when we don’t have language, the self does not get expressed. (p. 101)

Storti (2001) comments on the additional energy and effort required when interacting with people in the new country, as follows:

With new people, however, who don’t yet have an impression of you, you tend to be very careful of what you say and do until you see how they respond. Being careful like this, paying close, conscious attention to everything you say and do, takes considerable emotional and physical effort. (p. 7)

However, the benefits of learning another language, or the language of the culture in which you live, can be recognised before language proficiency is reached. The efforts of the language learner are appreciated by native speakers, particularly those who have themselves learnt another language, not least because, as Storti (2001) writes, “Implicit in the act, after all, is the acknowledgement of the humanity and

worth of the other person” (p. 102), the feelings of vulnerability are lessened and cultural learning begins, even in the early stages of language learning.

It is clear that learning a second language as an adult is a complex process involving aspects of returning to learning that are common to all adult learning contexts but others that are specific to second language learning. The experience of these language learners “reminds us that adults cannot be considered isolated from their prior experience and life context” (King, 2000, p. 82) and yet another layer of complexity is added when the language learning occurs in a country other than one’s own, where, to function independently, learning the target language is essential and the time in which to do so is limited, as was the case for the adults in this study. Adults with their added responsibilities, generally attempt to learn the target language as efficiently and effectively as possible within the time frame available. To this end, strategies that expedite acquisition of the target language are helpful for both second language learner and teacher to take into consideration for their own praxis.

## **2.2 The “Good” Language Learner**

A number of scholars have compiled lists of characteristics that successful language learners exhibit through examining case studies of both L1 and L2 learners. These “good language learner” studies examine the difference between the strategies employed by learners who were successful in their language learning and those who were not, to identify the characteristics of learners that predisposed them to good or poor learning (Norton & Toohey, 2001). From these studies interest was generated in learner strategies and in corresponding teaching or training in effective strategies, which has continued.

Ellis (1985) notes the difficulty in distinguishing relationships between variables such as cognitive style and personality, or age and motivation when investigating individual differences. Ellis (1985) concludes that there is a relationship between personal factors such as motivation, language aptitude and personality; the general factors in the learning environment; and language proficiency. According to the list developed by Ellis (1985), good language learners will:



- be able to respond to the group dynamics of the learning situation so as not to develop negative anxiety and inhibitions;
- seek out all opportunities to use the target language;
- make maximum use of opportunities afforded to practise listening to and responding to speech in the L2 addressed to him and to others - this will involve attending to meaning rather than to form;
- supplement the learning that derives from direct contact with speakers of the L2 with learning derived from the use of study techniques (such as making vocabulary lists) - this is likely to involve attention to form;
- be an adolescent or an adult rather than a young child, at least as far as the early stages of grammatical development are concerned;
- possess sufficient analytic skills to perceive, categorize, and store the linguistic features of the L2, and also to monitor errors;
- possess a strong reason for learning the L2 (which may reflect an integrative or an instrumental motivation) and also develop a strong *task motivation* (i.e. respond positively to the learning tasks chosen or provided);
- be prepared to experiment by taking risks, even if this makes the learner appear foolish; and
- be capable of adapting to different learning conditions. (p. 122)

To clarify the seventh point above, Ellis (1985) describes as *integrative motivation*, learner aspiration to identify with the culture of the L2 group by learning its language whereas *instrumental motivation* is indicated when the learner has functional reasons for learning the L2, such as passing examinations or advancing career prospects.

Brown and Rodgers (2002, p. 258) ranked a list of 10 specific and practical items that were presented by language learners in a study into preferred learning strategies, as follows:

- talking to L1 speakers;
- pictures, films, videos;
- learning by doing;
- talking to friends;
- practising out of class;
- watching television;

- small group work;
- in-class conversation;
- having a course book; and
- learning by hearing.

It is notable that, in this type of research at the time, the context in which learning takes place and the general environment in which the learner was placed was regarded “as at most a modifier of the internal activity that occurred in individual language learners” (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 308). Norton and Toohey (2001) regard context as essential to good language learning, in terms of the opportunities offered to them by the communities in which they are involved and they argue for “approaches to good language learning that focus not only on learners' internal characteristics, learning strategies, or linguistic outputs but also on the reception of their actions in particular sociocultural communities” (p. 308). Their conclusions were that to understand good language learning, context and the learners' access to social networks are also of importance in enhancing language proficiency. The good learners in their study were able to access social and peer networks within their communities through use of their own social and intellectual resources. The results from this study would also indicate the importance to the learner of the social context of language learning, not only to develop proficiency but to progress cultural adjustment.

### **2.3 Identity and Language Learning**

As has already been referred to in section 2.1, learning a second language has the potential to impact the identity and the self-concept of the learner and when learning occurs in another country the impact is heightened as the person negotiates the new cultural context and language. Language forms an inseparable part of culture as do shared customs and conventions and it could be said that negotiation of the new cultural context is through the new language, as language functions within a culture to maintain and express it. When regarding identity in more detail, the integral nature of language becomes apparent, as Storti (2001) maintains, “Language is not simply about how people speak; it is who they are” (p. 101).

The term identity proves challenging to circumscribe, but is generally used to describe an individual's sense of self; the personal characteristics that make a person unique and identifiable from others. Sociologists argue that identity is largely shaped by social forces, "by important shared cultural norms and values and symbols interwoven into these social arrangements and into the consciousness of individual members" (Bilton, Bonnet, Jones, Lawson, Skinner, Stanworth & Webster, 2002, p. 16), thus, the culture in which we live and its expectations of us have a profound impact on aspects of identity. Identity is significantly constructed through interaction with others and their conceptions of us; some arguing that identity develops or is revealed only through dialogue (Brown, 2003). Similarly, the notion of self-concept has been suggested to describe the image or concept of ourselves that develops from the reaction of others to us through processes of interaction (Van Krieken, 2006).

Identity is also defined by the social roles we play in society such as mother, father, teacher, or student and is reflected in the groups in which we have membership such as nation, ethnicity, or gender which is generally regarded as our social identity. These complex roles and relationships of the individual and the social are influenced by relationships of power, defined and constructed through language (Norton Peirce, 1995). These roles and relationships change later in life, Tennant and Pogson (2002) stating that, "The idea that one's personality or identity changes and/or develops during the adult years is now generally accepted" (p. 4). In our own cultures, we are able to negotiate our everyday lives, improvising and adjusting as necessary, understanding the circumstances and consequences of our actions and are able to articulate the reasons for the choices we make (Bilton et al., 2002).

Our culture provides us with a structure for determining our behaviour and that of others and what is considered of value, while any disturbance increases apprehension. Membership in a particular cultural group and not in others defines a person's cultural identity which is strengthened by constant contact with those who share beliefs, behaviours and a geographical location. Cultural identity however, is not generally recognized by the individual as a part of identity as culture surrounds us in an ever-present manner. It is not until we are outside of our usual cultural or

social context and commencing a period of transition when cultural identity “will emerge and become salient” (Sussman, 2000, p. 363).

When learning a language, the second language learner is engaged in new social contexts and relationships where the norms, values and symbols must be learned. Language “is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication but is understood with reference to its social meaning” (Norton Peirce, 1995, p 13). When engaged in learning a second language a person constantly makes linguistic choices regarding lexis, phonology and grammar appropriate for the discourse, and in addition the person is engaged in social interactions and relationships involving cultural rules and social behaviours (Fenimore, 1997). This constant negotiation in the new context involves what Brown (2000) describes as a “reorientation of thinking and feeling” (p. 182), and often involves experiences of culture shock.

#### **2.4 Language Learning and Culture Stress**

When the newcomer lives for an extended period in an unfamiliar country with a different culture and environment, many unfamiliar experiences have to be contended with, the combined impact of which has traditionally been labelled culture shock or culture stress. Culture shock is a universally experienced aspect of transition towards adjustment encountered by those living in a culture other than their own as the person deals with a series of events and experiences different from those faced in their own culture (Hu, 2008) and, for the adult student, these differences include dealing with unfamiliar educational systems, organizations and expectations. Whereas in the past a move to a new culture was often permanent with a loss of contact with the home country, nowadays sojourners move abroad for shorter lengths of time and for a multiplicity of reasons such as study or business, for volunteer programmes or to seek refuge (Sussman, 2000). In general, the participants in this study could be described as sojourners as they anticipate returning to their home culture at some stage in the future, with some participants already having returned after a period of time spent working in another country.

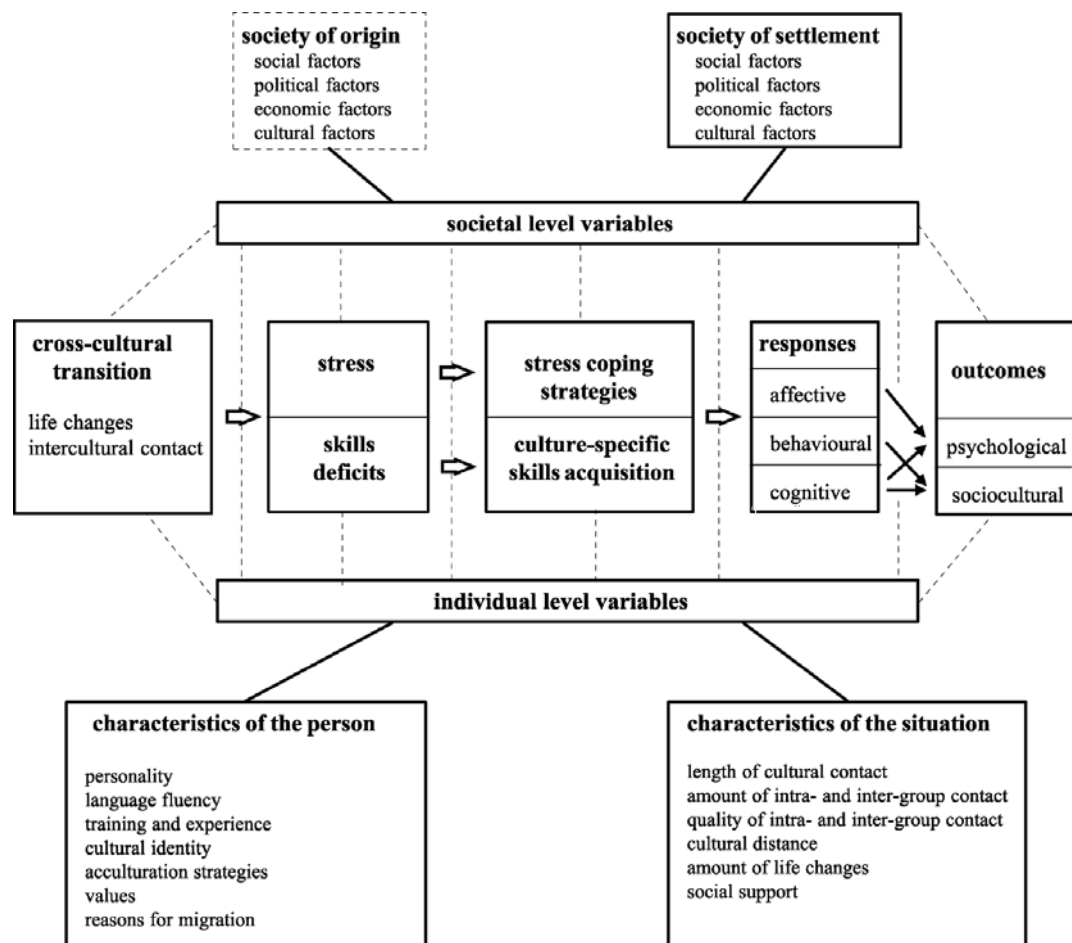
Generally symptoms of culture shock have been identified as ranging from mild to severe, involving a range of feelings from anxiety, frustration and homesickness to those of alienation, hostility and anger with the new culture, brought about through a

loss of the familiar. Since the 1960's culture shock has been described as a number of stages identified by Furnham (2005, p. 710) from an initial fascination with the new culture (*Honeymoon*) through to a critical point where the person either rejects or accepts the culture (*Crisis*), and on acceptance (*Recovery*) the person adapts and moves on to acculturation (*Adjustment*) (Brown, 2000; Guirdham, 1999; Furnham, 2005). Return to the home culture places another set of demands upon the person as they adjust to the changes in themselves personally and in their home culture and has been called reentry, reacculturation or repatriation (Sussman, 2000).

There are a range of terms used for this transition process in the literature: acculturation, culture shock, cross-cultural adaptation or adjustment, all of which are generally used interchangeably, however Sussman (2000) contends that they differ distinctly in meaning. Rather than describing the differing stages of culture shock, Sussman (2000) classifies the initial negative response to a new culture as culture shock; the process of modifying behaviour and attitude to the new culture as adjustment; the outcomes of adjustment as adaptation; and the more long-term adaptation of immigrants or minority groups within a society as acculturation. Contemporary intercultural theories address the affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of responses to contact with a new culture. The person involved in the transition experience is regarded as actively responding to change rather than "being passive victims of trauma stemming from a noxious event" (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008, p. 65). The changes that living in a new culture bring are regarded as opportunities for skill and coping strategy development. Although culture shock to some extent is inevitable, it is experienced by individuals to different degrees, with factors such as personality and the extent to which the host culture differs from the home culture thought to influence stress reactions; those with a strong home cultural identity experience greater levels of difficulty in the acculturation process (Guirdham, 1999).

Zhou et al. (2008) propose a model of the acculturation process that takes into account these influencing characteristics (Figure 1, p. 31). The model is helpful in presenting the complex nature of the acculturation process and in collating the factors that affect the extent of stress experienced. There is a thorough consideration of the impact, not just of the factors within the individual, but also socio-cultural

factors both in the home culture and in the target culture, while demonstrating that the process will be different for each individual in individual contexts. There are numerous factors that contribute to this process, and in identifying and collating them, this model may help to more intentionally or proactively prepare for the inevitable stressors faced when moving to another culture.



*Figure 1.* The acculturation process (Zhou et al., 2008, p. 69).

Those who negotiate the culture shock experience successfully gain new perspectives on themselves, a deeper understanding of other people and a more profound awareness of the host culture. This process of acculturation or transformation to acculturation is regarded by Brown (2000) as essentially the development of a new or second identity within the new context, also described as the development of an

intercultural identity (Fenimore, 1997; Guirdham, 1999), with Fenimore suggesting five qualities of intercultural identity:

- acceptance of original and new cultural elements;
- increased scope, depth and perspective in perception;
- increased self-knowledge, self-trust, and self-directedness;
- increased inner resilience that facilitates further development; and
- increased creative resourcefulness to deal with new challenges.

(Fenimore, 1997, p. 9)

## **2.5 Significance for the Second Language Learner**

What is the significance of these dimensions of language learning for the person learning a second language in a new culture? Language fluency is a factor identified in Figure 1 as impacting the acculturation process and Storti (2001) concurs, describing the anxiety and feelings of vulnerability due to the feelings of lack of control that language learners experience when in the new cultural context:

Because language is the one of the principle means through which you can manipulate and control your environment and thereby enjoy a sense of wellbeing and security, the lack of language, not surprisingly, is one of the main reasons for feeling so helpless and vulnerable during the first few months abroad. (p. 98)

Second language learners often describe feelings of uncertainty over their choices of language at any given moment in the new context, with some describing disturbing incidents where they have suffered, what Fenimore (1997) describes as the grammar of self shock, “A sudden lack of confidence that persons feel when they can no longer understand, nor express themselves well with a new language” (p. 2). Storti (2001) concurs stating that, “There is the ever-present possibility that you may suddenly find yourself in situations where you can’t make yourself understood, where for want of being able to express your needs, you leave the situation with those needs unmet” ( p. 98).

Aspects of identity, social identity and cultural or intercultural identity are important considerations for second language learners as they move into multiple discourses

which are negotiated in their developing second language. Norton Peirce (1995) maintains that second language learner investment in the target language “must be understood in relation to the multiple, changing, and contradictory identities of language learners” (p. 26). There are vital opportunities for advancing language acquisition, but the experiences may not always be comfortable. Learners expect a return on the investment they make in learning a second language, and “this return on investment must be seen as commensurate with the effort expended on learning the second language” (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17).

Adults learning a second language in a new culture for any length of time are frequently accompanied by their family, and consequently the stresses of adjusting to the new culture are experienced, not only by the language learner, but by their loved ones as well. It is normal practice, in fact encouraged, within the organisational context of the WCHO for the family unit, parents and children, to be involved in the language learning experience. It would seem that the impact of cultural adjustment on families must be an important contributing factor to the overall experience of the second language learner, particularly if family members undergo difficulties in the process.

For individuals and for families the disruption or loss of routine experienced on relocation to the new cultural context can be a major contributor to stress. Storti (2001) presents an explanation of the importance of establishing routines in the new country in the overall settling process:

The lifeblood of routines is the known and familiar. Needless to say, when you move to a new country, where nothing is known and familiar, your routines get mightily disrupted. Suddenly, nothing... is routine. The loss of routine means the time and energy that were available for higher order, more sophisticated tasks now goes to basic coping and survival functions.... the loss of routines hits you at your core. You expect to have to learn how to do new things overseas and even new ways of doing familiar things, but you may be surprised to discover that you have to learn to do things you normally do without thinking. (p. 6)



It would seem that this social and relational aspect of cultural adaptation is of great importance to all involved. Perhaps these aspects are, to a certain extent, the hidden costs of learning a second language in a culture other than one's own, yet for an adult learner to have a successful language learning experience the stability of the family is of prime concern. Success can be regarded in the day-to-day terms of seeing children settled and routines established; concerns of the everyday which, at first glance, may seem mundane and unimportant.

Of all those travelling across cultures, students moving overseas for educational purposes are perhaps one of the best researched groups, due mainly to the accessibility of participants (Zhou et al., 2008). Walling, Erikson, Meese, Ciofica, and Gorton (2006) emphasise the influence of cultural transitions on cultural identity in studies carried out amongst college students studying abroad, noting that while adjustments or shifts in identity may be beneficial to those relocating permanently, "such shifts may not be advantageous for short-term visitors" (p. 154) causing the returned travellers to feel a sense of disconnection upon re-entry to their home culture.

The consequences of contact with a different culture on a person's identity in general and cultural identity in particular are discussed by Sussman (2000). In referring to four hypotheses in this subject area, namely contact hypothesis, cultural hybridization, acculturation theory and social identity theory, Sussman (2000) notes that the conclusions drawn are for those who are relocating permanently to a new culture rather than those who will eventually return to their own culture. The participants in this study would, under normal circumstances, return to their home countries at some stage in the future, but at the time of writing the majority were preparing to move to a new third culture or already working within their COS.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The dialogue in this chapter has revealed that the adult English language learning experience is not as straightforward as it may first appear. Although movement between cultures has become more common, it is not necessarily any simpler or easier and the experience is no less demanding for those involved. From the literature discussed in this chapter, layers to the experience can be identified, from

the more obvious external facet of classroom experience, to the wider context of the experience with its bearing on the learner's family, to the influences of the experiences on personal identity. The obvious and the seemingly mundane, becomes of great consequence when a change in culture adds new dimensions. Challenges can be regarded as situations that test us in a manner that is stimulating and it is apparent that ELL presents multifarious challenges.

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter has provided a discussion on issues of significance to the study from the discourse of second language learning with cross-cultural facets of the experience also considered. The following matters have been covered in this chapter:

- an explication of the manner in which the literature review has been undertaken in this study;
- a discussion of the challenges faced by adult ELL including language anxiety;
- characteristics of the good language learner;
- the influence of the second language learning process on identity;
- the additional demands that a new cultural context places on adult language learners;
- the process of acculturation; and
- the significance of these issues for the second language learner.

Chapter three follows, continuing the literature review with a focus on the influence of global trends in English language pedagogy and in the discourse of ELT generally.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Global Dimensions of English Language Pedagogy**

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the spread of English plunged forward at a rapid rate, as globalisation became part of everyday lives for much of the world's population. Whether the dominance of English is considered a positive, negative or a neutral factor it can now be regarded as a Global or an International Language. Pakir (1999) is adamant that "there is no retreat from English; no retreat from an English speaking world" (p. 106). If this is so, how can English language teachers best prepare learners to face an English-speaking world with confidence? The experiences of the participants in this study fit very much into the global dimension of English, as at the time of the study they were either learning English or utilising English in international settings, at times even in a global sense. Contending with English in international contexts is a reality for the participants and this chapter discusses issues of importance to their experiences.

The chapter begins by addressing the relationship between the spread of English and globalisation, before a model of English language usage, with current opinions on whether English can be described as an international or a global language, is presented. The reasons English has become increasingly influential worldwide and the rise of World Englishes are explored before the difficulties and disparities caused by the pervasive nature of English are presented. The significance for these developments for English language teachers is then investigated.

#### **3.1 English and Globalisation**

In considering the growing dominance of English internationally, it is helpful to examine reasons for the spread of English and its links with globalisation. To Block (2004) globalisation is the "intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (p. 75). The Globalisation Guide (2002) delineates globalisation as "a process in which geographic distance becomes a factor of diminishing importance in the establishment and maintenance of cross border economic, political, and social relations" (para.5). This essentially capitalist process has come about with the physical and technological movement of people in business,

for tourism, and for employment, which increased in momentum during the late twentieth century.

There seem to have been pivotal moments in the process of globalisation. Its beginnings are linked to the expansion of European capitalism and colonisation in the sixteenth century (Block, 2004). This was followed in the late nineteenth century by an expansion in world trade and the establishment of international standards in some areas such as the International Date Line, international standards for telegraphy and signalling, and the adoption of the Gregorian calendar across the world. With the end of the Second World War, multinational companies and international business expanded as did air travel and international communications. The development of the Internet in the last decade of the twentieth century enabled business to operate on a global level (Globalisation Guide, 2002).

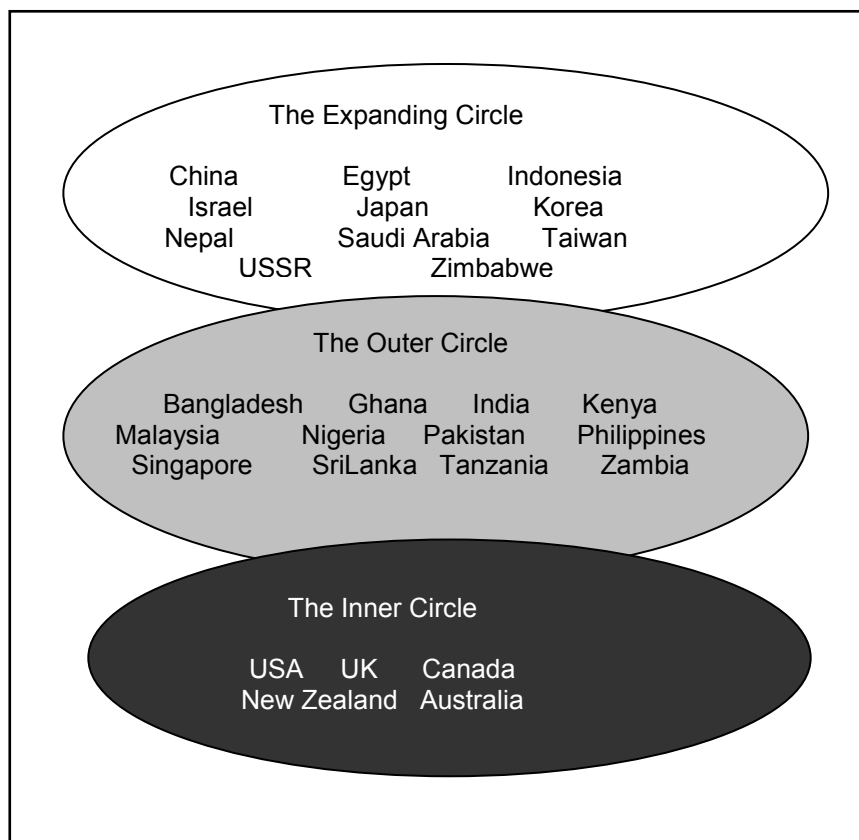
The gradual spread of English began with European colonisation in the sixteenth century and has increased rapidly with globalisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to become, according to Raley (1997), “a contemporary phenomenon driven both by British imperialism and the ascension of the US economy after WW II” (p. 2). With the development of multinational organizations, international or worldwide bodies, scientific research, media and technology English has become recognised as the language of globalisation (Globalisation Guide, 2002). Increasingly, English is facilitating communication internationally and can be described as a global commodity (Pakir, 1999). According to The Economist (2001) 85% of all international organizations include English as one of their official languages. Participation in diplomacy, commerce, finance and industry on an international level is increasingly dependent on the use of English as are areas within the entertainment industry and the arts (Modiano, 2001; Pakir, 1999). Today, there are international discourses that operate exclusively in English, such as air-traffic control and shipping.

As countries become involved in the international arena, the infrastructure to support these activities is also dependent on English. Modiano (2001) explains that the global village and information highways have been constructed using English, with the situation today summed up by McKay (2002), “The widespread use of English in

a variety of political and intellectual areas makes it imperative for any country wishing to access the global community for economic development to have access to it” (p. 17).

### 3.2 Kachru’s Model of English Usage

The most widely accepted model of the spread and current usage of English around the world is that developed in 1989 by Kachru (Figure 2, below). Kachru (in Crystal, 1997) classifies countries into three concentric circles; the inner circle, outer or extended circle and expanding circle, related to the way English is used.



*Figure 2. Kachru’s model of World English (Adapted by Chang, 2008. p. 4).*

Kachru also provides an estimate of the numbers of English speakers involved in each area. In inner circle countries, English functions as a primary or first language (L1). Countries in this circle include the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Canada, with an estimated 320-380 million people represented by this circle.

The outer or extended circle countries use English as a second language (L2) amongst other languages in a multilingual setting. Countries such as Singapore, Malawi and India are amongst over fifty others with an estimated 150-300 million people included in this circle. The expanding circle includes countries where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) without any official or special status. Countries such as China, Japan, Greece and Poland are included in this ever-growing circle of between 100-1,000 million people.

There is movement between the bands in the model, particularly with countries in the expanding circle as patterns of English usage changes. McKay (2002) lists twenty countries which are in transition from expanding circle to outer circle use of English. In these countries, English had been used exclusively for international communication but increasingly it is being used for activities within the country.

### **3.3 English: A Global or an International Language?**

Has English achieved global language status? There appear to be differing opinions as to whether English is emerging as an international language or global language or if it has in fact, already achieved this status. In the literature, both terms are used, at times interchangeably. McKay (2002) employs the term English as an International Language (EIL), defining it as the language used in cross-cultural communication by native speakers and bilingual users of English, locally within one country, or globally between speakers from different countries. McKay (2002) points out that English has fulfilled the four markers of an international language: English is dominant in economic and cultural areas, English has developed in multilingual situations, it is spoken in many different levels of society, and it has spread not only by migration but through individuals learning or acquiring the language.

Perhaps the question to ask is not what a global language is, but how does a language reach a global status? Crystal (1997) suggests that when a language has a “special role that is recognized in every country” (p. 2) whether as a mother tongue, an official language of a country or as a priority language in a country’s foreign language teaching programme, it has become a global language. Crystal asserts that English has reached this stage and so can be called a Global Language or Global English (GE).

There are those who continue to question the actual meaning of Global English. Raley (1997) states that “Global English does not exist per se” (p. 3) but classifies English as a dominant language. Lotherington (2004) states that English has arrived in the twenty first century “as a language dominating global economic, information and popular media sphere” (p. 78). Lotherington (2004) also comments that English has grown to become a lingua mundi or world language, as Cope and Kalantzis (1996) concur. Raley (1997) presents two alternative uses of the term “Global English” noting that in software technology the label Global English is used to imply an easily accessible or neutral dialect, also using Global English to describe literature written by “the new generation of cosmopolitan writers” using English (p. 2).

### **3.4 Why English?**

Yet, the question remains; why English? Is there anything inherent within English that makes it more suitable than any other major language to take on the role of global language? The Economist (2001) notes that strengthening factors within the English language include its ability to accommodate new words and to constantly expand, as is evidenced by the inclusion of jargon used in connection with computing, the Internet and mobile phones in the language. Graddol (1997) describes English as a permeable or constantly changing language, and identifies this as a feature that has enabled the language to expand into new areas. However, although a contributing factor, this does not account for the expansion in use of English internationally.

It could be assumed that an international language is one that has the largest number of speakers. Crystal (1997) suggests that by the last decade of the twentieth century 1.2-1.5 billion or almost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the world’s population were competent or fluent in English. That compares with 1.1 billion Chinese speakers. However, McKay (2003b) states that Mandarin has three times the number of native speakers than English. Whereas Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, English and Hindi are the most widely spoken mother tongues in the world, there is agreement in the literature that the number of second language (L2) speakers of English will soon outnumber native speakers. According to The Economist (2001), predictions indicate that by 2050 half the world’s population will be proficient to some degree in English. Individuals

speak English as a second or third language and, consequently, English has truly become an international language.

Crystal (1997) concludes that a language becomes international because of the political, economic and military power of its people. Although Britain had taken English throughout the world along with its colonial aspirations, in the twentieth century it was the economic dominance of America that maintained the presence of English globally. As noted earlier, the use of English to communicate not only locally but internationally also has become regarded as essential in this global era. Crystal (1997) observes that possibly the best definition of a truly global language is that “its usage is not restricted by countries or ... by governing bodies” (p. 130). Raley (1997) agrees, describing Global English in terms of its potential to “transcend boundaries of nation and race” (p. 3). Modiano (2001) maintains that, as a global language, English has become public property or a *lingua franca*.

### **3.5 World Englishes**

In current literature the term World English (WE) or Englishes is used but with a different meaning from Global or International English. Does World English or World Englishes exist? McKay (2002) uses the term World English to describe “nativised varieties of English” (p. 54) and limits the use to those Englishes spoken in Outer Circle countries. McKay (2002) notes that in outer circle countries English functions in many varied aspects of life. Brown (2000) suggests that these diverse Englishes formed once English speaking colonial powers had withdrawn from their territories, leaving a local form of English which are often the medium of education; the English that children learn at school.

New, unique varieties of English have been accepted and codified, but what are the characteristics of World Englishes? These new forms have their own rules and grammar and are valid forms of English, reflecting the identity of the speakers. Graddol (1997) notes that when English becomes a part of a society it develops in “ways which reflect local culture and language while diverging increasingly from the English spoken in the inner circle countries” (p. 2). They are individualised by accent and national origin although discourses such as professional or technical



communities are also developing differentiated Englishes (Cope and Kalantzis 1996). Rajagopalan (2004) describes World English as a “hotchpotch” of dialects and accents without rules or with rules that are constantly changing. Raley (1997) presents a list of terms coined to describe these Englishes: Arablish, Benglish, Chinglish, Denglish, Dutchlish, Eurolish, Hindlish/Hinglish, Italglish, Singlish, Spanlish and Yinglish among them.

Importantly, Brown (2000) observes that learning a form of World English does not involve learning a new culture. Whereas languages are normally built around a population of native speakers with associated non-native speakers, World English has no native speakers and this is a unique phenomenon. Rajagopalan (2004) insists that World English “belongs to everybody who speaks it but it is nobody’s mother tongue” (p. 111). Modiano (2001) notes that in these forms English is emerging as a marker of world culture rather than reflecting a single culture as non-native speakers of English are producing cultural artefacts in English.

To some however, English as a world language, along with Spanish, brings with it a Western worldview of “commercial–industrial progress as our basic referent for reality and value” (Goulah, 2006, p. 213) which is at odds with local cultures. To Goulah (2006), “The negativity associated with English as the ‘world language’ is understandable. Not only is the language being forced upon people, but also the attendant worldview as the ‘grand narrative’” (p. 214).

### **3.6 Difficulties and Disparities**

Pakir (1999) notes that English can often be regarded as the language of opportunity and so access to it must be assured, while Nunan (2003) observes that English is influencing government policies and practices as governments strive to remain part of the global market, yet there appears to be little research done in these areas. Although governments have policies relating to the teaching of English there are difficulties implementing them as globally there has been a shortage of adequately trained teachers. Without English, individuals will not be able to access or participate in the “global village”. Will, questions Modiano (2001), those who have access to English become a privileged class enjoying the benefits while others suffer

consequently? In the literature, both sides are argued. There are those who see English as a form of colonialism, “accentuating the divide between the haves and the have-nots” (Graddol, 1997, p. 38). Others regard access to English as access to information, communication and the beneficial impact of economic development, yet access to knowledge through the global communications system is costly and it is possible that an impoverished class without access may develop (Graddol, 1997).

There is a danger that as English spreads it may threaten linguistic diversity. As countries participate in globalisation, there is a trend towards a reduced linguistic diversity as small language communities vanish, as Goulah (2006) describes:

Catastrophic language loss is already well advanced in Australia and the Americas, and the linguistic diversity of Siberia, Africa, and South and Southeast Asia is also threatened. The replacing languages are of a new type: “world languages” – English and Spanish are the most important – are replacing not only small local languages, but major regional languages with speakers numbering in millions. Linguistic diversity with its attendant multilingualism is being replaced by massive monolingualism in these world languages. (p. 213)

Although it may be possible to connect speakers of a minority language using global technology, the Internet is beginning to reflect a trend towards using local languages rather than English as user numbers increase, small languages are disappearing at an alarming rate. With each language goes a unique culture and history. The importance of taking action to protect minority tongues and cultures from extinction is emphasised in the literature.

### **3.7 The Role of the Native Speaker and the Bilingual Teacher of English**

One major issue facing ELT is the role of the native speaker, Rajagopalan (2004) maintaining that the native speaker has always played a central role in ELT. Although there is growing preference for communicative intelligibility as a goal, native speaker norms have historically been the measure of success in English language teaching. However, as we have seen, many second language speakers of English will not be living or interacting in a native-English-speaking context

(McKay, 2003b). Rajagopalan (2004) argues that the native speaker model is no longer the model speaker of WE and, if monolingual, the native speaker of English may be at a disadvantage in the WE context. In many situations, NSE teachers are given preference in ELT jobs (McKay, 2003a). Rajagopalan (2004) agrees that unfair hiring practices have resulted because of the centrality given to the NSE teacher. In private language schools, there is often a disparity in the fees charged for classes conducted by a NSE teacher. However, there is a general agreement in the literature that the strengths of the NNSE teacher or bilingual teacher need to be recognised.

Bilingual teachers of English have many advantages in the Global English perspective. They are undoubtedly the best equipped to provide the knowledge about local culture and language essential to a contextualised teaching and learning framework. They can provide models of successful language learning and have insights into a culturally appropriate teaching methodology. Pakir (1999) is of the opinion that bilingual teachers will soon be the norm and this would avoid any perceived ideological or political influences from a NSE teacher and the association of English with westernisation or linguistic imperialism. However, many bilingual teachers of English acknowledge limited opportunities for continuing education or for professional development (McKay, 2003a; Nunan, 2003).

### **3.8 Standards of English**

Whereas the premise in the past has been that people learned English to speak to a NSE, this is no longer the case. Timmis (2002) estimates that up to 80% of communication using English takes place between non-native speakers. There are those concerned that allowing the growth of different forms of English (differences in pronunciation, grammar and expressions) will eventually render the language unintelligible. Macedo (2001) notes, however, that “there is nothing linguistically inferior about non-standard forms of English. They are simply different forms used by various speakers of English” (p. 6). In countries where English is not the national language the forms spoken have been acculturated; adapted to suit the speakers’ needs in that country.

Graddol (1997) notes that the editorial process in printed matter and broadcasting has maintained standards of English in the past, but these checks no longer remain as broadcasting is increasingly localised and electronic communications operate independently. Graddol also comments on the trend to a more informal and conversational form of English operating worldwide. ELT throughout the world has also contributed to continuity in grammar and vocabulary. Natural boundaries do exist, however, which enable communication to take place internationally. To succeed in communicating effectively, speech must be intelligible to those listening. Where inaccurate pronunciation prohibits understanding change is necessary for communication to continue. Rather than move towards a “standard” English, Macedo (2001) argues that learners need a universally accepted level or “a global standard of intelligibility” (p. 6). Graddol (1997) suggests that in the future a number of standards will emerge, perhaps American Standard, Received Pronunciation and an Asian Standard, while Crystal (1997) proposes that a form of “World Standard Spoken English” (p. 137) may develop.

### **3.9 Pronunciation Models**

With the emergence of World Englishes, the question of pronunciation models in teaching arises. In results of a survey conducted, Timmis (2002) concluded that amongst the learners taking part, there was an evident desire to conform to native-speaker norms in pronunciation although the main motivation in learning English was to communicate. Learners regarded native speaker norms of pronunciation as an ideal at which to aim, even if unattainable whereas teachers regarded accented intelligibility as the most desirable outcome for pronunciation. Both learners and teachers regarded the retaining of individual identity by preserving some accent as important. Timmis (2002) highlights the need for teachers to be aware of learner goals, and to consider those who have native-speaker norms as their goal.

According to Jenkins, (n.d.) it is time to question the most appropriate or intelligible accent for communication between two NNSE in the EIL context, which may not be a NSE accent. Jenkins (n.d.) lists features of a “Lingua Franca Core” (LFC) which are essential for intelligible communication in the EIL context, and consequently for teaching pronunciation, and those that are not. Elements regarded as essential include all consonant sounds except *th* in *thin* or *this* and consonant clusters at the

beginning and in the middle of words. Elements that Jenkins (n.d.) regards as unessential include *th* sounds, features of connected speech and vowel quality where length is not involved and stress timing. Jenkins (n.d.) concludes that learners of English should be given the choice of pronunciation model they wish to study. While the LFC may be regarded by some as a “justification for mediocrity” (Keys, 2002, p. 299), Keys regards it as a solid foundation for EIL rather than as an end-point. Jenkins (n.d.) also highlights the importance of giving students exposure to a wide range of NNSE pronunciation models. McKay (2002) agrees that learning a wider range of varieties spoken within a community will facilitate wider audience.

However, it would seem that by limiting the models to NNSE that potential communication with NS of English would also be limited. By including native speaker models of pronunciation, learners have an opportunity to add another dimension to their pronunciation repertoire, which may further facilitate communication internationally. Fraser (1999) considers that it may be offensive to dictate an “accent norm” to which learners must conform, rather learners should be given the freedom to express themselves in the accent of their choice and that it is effective pronunciation teaching that gives learners this choice.

### **3.10 Significance for English Language Teaching**

With the immense changes occurring in the field of English teaching, awareness is developing of the need to appraise English language teaching practices in light of what we know about WE. As a global language, English is increasingly spoken as an adjunct language alongside other local languages. Many people are learning English as a second or third language, Graddol (1997) predicting that within a decade bilingual speakers of English will outnumber native speakers. These bilingual speakers of English are living in multilingual contexts, interacting with other bilingual rather than native speakers of English and consequently their needs in learning English are different from those living and interacting within a NSE context (McKay, 2003a).

Lotherington (2004) notes that the exporting of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method with language resources needs to be questioned in light of developments in EIL and the growth of World Englishes as any one method may be

culturally or pedagogically inappropriate, McKay (2002) contending that, not only each country, but also each classroom context will dictate the approach best used. McKay (2003a) notes that in learning English in a global language context the learner may have no need to internalise a NSE culture. Hardy (2004) agrees that L2 speakers can retain their own cultures and values while communicating in English, English then becomes denationalised in that the language can be used without endorsing the politics of any particular country (Hardy, 2004; McKay, 2003a). It would seem that denationalising English then separates it from its colonial past and from westernisation. For those living in former colonies it is understandable that English can be regarded as the remnants of colonialism or may be linked to exploitation. However, one wonders in reality, if it is possible to truly denationalise a language, particularly when language is integrally intertwined with culture?

In teaching English as an adjunct language the needs and goals of the learners are paramount, as there are in any teaching situation. Global English coexists with other local languages and is often used for specific purposes or in specific contexts. It is generally agreed that one of the main aims in acquiring a language is to communicate our culture to others. To facilitate this process in the teaching and learning context, it is recommended that material from the local cultural situation be used rather than those based on NSE models (McKay, 2003a). Modiano (2001) emphasises the importance of teaching a wide range of vocabulary varieties so that learners understand that no single variety is superior to another.

If English is a global commodity, then ELT has become “big business”. According to Crystal (1997) ELT has become “one of the growth industries around the world in the past thirty years” (p. 103). Pakir (1999, p. 112) contends that English is “a rich and important global resource that many buyers and sellers want trade in,” British Council estimates for 1999 were that one billion people in the world were learners of English (Cook, n.d.). As English language teachers, there is a need to be aware that we are part of the spread of English that is “altogether too complicated to be considered benign or evil” (Block, 2004, p. 76).

In the EIL context, it is essential to implement teaching practices that support the integrity of the NNSE culturally and linguistically while ensuring intelligibility in

cross-cultural situations. Block (2004) notes that “in recent years there is an altogether more reflective and nuanced approach to language teaching methods and their transferability around the world as well as the cultural appropriacy of particular language materials in different parts of the world” (p. 76) which bodes well for English language teaching moving into a global future.

Whether English has become a global or an international language or both there is no doubt that it is a dominant language in the world today. With the growth of new forms of English and new approaches to connecting internationally with English, English language teachers are able to play an instrumental role in facilitating participation in what is occurring on a global scale. The challenge remains achieving global participation while maintaining the integrity of local cultures and languages.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

The issues that have been discussed in this chapter are issues of concern for English language teachers who generally strive to attain the best outcomes for the learners with whom they work. From the researcher’s perspective, keeping informed of current debate is empowering, enabling informed decisions on praxis to be made and reflection on her own experiences in light of findings. Being informed of the wider issues helps to prevent inadvertently becoming involved in practices that are in any way destructive or of unwittingly imposing unnecessary burdens on our learners. It also enables us to regard the ELL process from a global perspective, and it is in this global context that our learners will participate.

It is through exploring the literature that the wider dimensions of ELT become apparent, from the person to person contact in the classroom context to the place of English globally, and it is of equal importance to understand the implications of our actions in each context. Surveying the literature has, for the researcher, enhanced understanding and enlarged perspective. The future presents many new exciting opportunities for cooperation to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved for all and that English language learners are well equipped to take their place and contribute to dialogue in a global sense.

### **3.12 Summary**

This chapter has presented a discussion of the literature on the current issues of importance in English language pedagogy that relate directly to the experiences of participants in this study. In the chapter the following issues have been addressed:

- the links between English and globalisation with reference also to Kachru's model of English usage;
- the status of English as a global or international language;
- the growth of World Englishes with the related issues of standards of English including pronunciation models; and
- the consequences of new trends on English language teaching.

Having examined the current concerns from literature from the discourse of English language teaching, the following chapter examines the literature on learning in adulthood as it relates to this study, considering aspects of both theory and practice.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Learning in Adulthood**

The focus of this study is the experiences of adults learning in the specific area of English as a second language and as such it is advantageous to consider the adult experience of learning in general as it relates to this study. This chapter examines the literature from the discourse of adult learning as related to this study, examining theories that to some extent provide explanations for features discerned from the data. Theories of major influence in adult learning in general, and in adult second language particularly, are considered including Knowles's andragogy and the Jarvis's (2006) model of the learning process leading to a consideration of the importance of context in adult learning experiences. Transformative learning theory is explored with the related aspects of individuation and the role of spirituality in the learning experiences of adults. The significance of these theories for English language teachers is also investigated.

Although there has been debate about the nature of learning as an adult when compared with that of children, the general consensus in the literature is that there is something singular about the way adults learn (Karagiorgi, Kalogirou, Theodosiou, Theophaneous, & Kendeou, 2008). Research in this area has traditionally been approached from psychological, philosophical and sociological perspectives, investigating areas such as cognitive development and adult intelligence and applying insights to praxis (Tennant, 1997). With the developing of the domain of lifelong learning, different perspectives are emerging which take into account the context of learning and its influence on the learner. These build on the foundational theories of learning (behaviourist, cognitive, constructivist and social learning theories) that have reflected different emphases and as such are taken as givens in this study. However, as stated in the introduction, it is the constructivist perspective that enlightens this thesis.

In attempting to comprehend the nature of learning in adulthood as an educator, it is enticing to look for a theory that encapsulates the learning experience in its totality, from which to develop appropriate teaching methods. Increasingly, however, the

literature on learning in adulthood acknowledges that this is an unattainable goal, as learning in adulthood is “a multifaceted phenomenon that defies simple descriptions or theorizing” (Courtney, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998, p. 65) and adults “can be paradoxical learners” (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler 2000, p. 3). As Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) comment:

But just as there is no single theory that explains human learning in general, no single theory of adult learning has merged to unify the field. Rather, there are a number of theories, models, and frameworks, each of which attempts to capture some aspect of adult learning. (p. 104)

Identifying specific theories, terms and definitions seems to be increasingly complex. The diversity of terms currently associated with the area of learning in adulthood such as adult learning, continuing education and adult education have in some ways become synonymous with the various disciplines concerned.

The terms lifelong (or life-long), life wide, and life based learning, although not new and overlapping at times, signify the continuing search to better reflect contexts in which adults learn, as the following delineations indicate:

Lifelong learning may be broadly defined as learning that is pursued throughout life: learning that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and in different places. Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life (i.e. post-compulsory education). (Lifelong Learning Council Queensland, 2008)

The concept [of lifelong learning] also consists of two dimensions: life-long learning, recognising that individuals learn throughout a lifetime, and life-wide learning, recognising the formal, non-formal and informal setting. (Clark, 2005, p. 52)

Life based learning acknowledges multiple sources of learning, which opens up opportunities for developing capability... What life based learning makes explicit is that individuals have knowledge, skills and capabilities that are not always visible or recognised by organizations even though they can

significantly contribute to organizational life. (Sharon, Jasinski, & Weatherley, 2006, p. 3)

Commonalities in the experiences of adults provide insights with which to approach the adult experience of learning and teaching or that help “shape images of adult learners and learning” (Kang, 2007, p. 206).

The starting point for the discussion on learning as an adult is the notion of adulthood; what is or when is an adult? As Burns (1995) comments, “There is no single point in time when a person suddenly and unambiguously becomes an adult in modern industrialized society” (p. 225). Adult development theory utilizes four perspectives to define an adult: the biological perspective which focuses on the physiological changes, often considered negatively; the psychological perspective which focuses on the sense of self; the sociocultural perspective which involves the roles fulfilled as an adult; and the integrative perspective which endeavours to consider the interaction of all three perspectives (Clark & Caffarella, 1999, pp. 5-6). However, in contemporary society there is recognition that the roles adults discharge and life stages that adults go through are neither inevitable nor predictable, they neither occur in any particular chronological order nor are traditional roles accepted without question (Field, 2006; Tennant, 1997). The participants in this study were deemed adults as all were over 18 years of age (the minimum age required to join the organization or to enrol in the courses) and were executing adult roles.

Having considered adulthood, it is essential to consider how the term learning is delineated in the literature. Learning is generally considered as a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of practice or experience, Burns (1995) noting that behaviour includes both “observable activity and internal processes” (p. 99), while others prefer to identify learning “in terms of growth, development of competencies, and fulfilment of potential” (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005, p. 13). Scholars also contend that learning needs to be linked to the social context where the learning occurs, taking account of the “affective, moral, physical... aspects of the individual” and acknowledging the significance of action in “real learning” (Foley, 2004, p. 19). Three dimensions involved in learning, namely society, emotion and cognition, are noted by Merriam et al. (2007) who comment that “our

learning is always within the society or social context in which we live and this context interacts with and shapes our learning” (p. 97). Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of learning and one that conveys the complexity of the process is that of Jarvis (2004) who delineates “human learning” as follows: “Human learning is a combination of processes whereby whole persons construct experiences of situations and transform them into knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, emotions and the senses, and integrate the outcomes into their own biographies” (p. 109).

#### **4.1 Addressing the Place of Andragogy**

In the context of learning as an adult, the term andragogy needs to be addressed in this study as it continues to be an important influence on the discussions on learning in adulthood. The andragogical “set of assumptions” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 104) were developed as the discourse of adult learning emerged and sought to distinguish itself from other areas of education. Principles of andragogy still permeate adult learning and adult second language learning discourses, yet use of the term itself appears to be considered legitimate and continues to be widely used in some discourses while considered unnecessary or out of vogue in others. The following discussion outlines the historical development and the contemporary place of andragogy and any lasting influence that it has had.

Defined by Knowles as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 61), andragogy developed and had wide influence in the USA throughout the 1970s and 80s, with extensive literature continuing to be published on andragogy both critiquing and addressing its application. Although an in-depth discussion of the historical roots or current conceptions of andragogy is beyond the scope of this study, it does have a place in any discussion of learning in adulthood as it is acknowledged as the “best-known theory of adult learning” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 104).

Although Knowles has been credited with developing andragogy in contrast to pedagogy in the USA (Knowles’ 1968 article in *Adult Leadership* was entitled *Andragogy not Pedagogy*), the term was already in use in Europe in what Reischmann (2004) calls three waves without one central definition, but with an

indication of the directions recognisable in adult teaching and learning discussions today, the importance of self-reflection and life experiences included. In Europe, the term andragogy “nowhere described one specific concept or movement”, rather it was used by “institutions, publications, programs” associated with adult education (Reischmann, 2004, p. 5). Reischmann (2004) notes the continued use of the term andragogy in Europe, South America and Korea, and a survey of journals indicates the term is still widely used, Savicevic (2008) commenting that “the greatest numbers of supporters of the concept of andragogy as a social scientific discipline (or under another name) come from Central and Eastern Europe and from the USA” (p. 361). However, Reischmann (2004) claims that other terminology is used more often.

Knowles’ approach to andragogy, received wide recognition across the English speaking world with its fundamental concepts of learner self-directedness and autonomy, and teacher role as facilitator. It is difficult to determine precisely what is meant by the term andragogy as introduced by Knowles, as it has been described variously as “a set of guidelines ..., a philosophy ..., a set of assumptions..., and a theory” (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 1). Merriam et al. (2007) comment on the paucity of empirical studies conducted focusing on andragogy: “Considering that andragogy has been the primary model of adult learning for over forty years, relatively little empirical work has been done to test the validity of its assumptions or its usefulness in predicting adult learning behaviour” (p. 91).

Knowles (1990) developed basic principles of adult learning that continue to be widely accepted and used as a basis for teaching practice, expanding existing historical assumptions. He developed a list of six core adult learning principles that he regarded essential for the teacher of adults to know, then specified what was necessary to help adults to learn:

- The need to know: adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
- Adults have a psychological need to be seen by others as capable of self-direction.
- Adults have a wealth of experiences which can be a resource for learning.
- Adults are ready to learn when necessary for real-life situations.

- Adults' orientation to learning is life-centred.
- The most potent motivations for adults to learn are internal. (Knowles et al., 2005, pp. 64-69)

The concept of the self-directed nature of learning, although challenged, has remained as foundational in adult learning and teaching, as has the importance of regard for the experiences of older learners. The literature continues to acknowledge that the substantial life experiences of adults are a key factor in providing a rich resource for learning, as Taylor et al. (2000) state, "These experiences are valuable – we would claim essential – contributions to the learning process" (p. 7). Adults have accumulated more experiences and have different experiences to children and these experiences are unique to the individual adult. However, experiences are not always positive and negative experiences can hinder learning or become an obstacle to the learner (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Although experiences can be a rich resource for learning, it is when we reflect on experience that it can be of value. Jarvis (2004) comments on the role of experience in adult learning as presented by Knowles:

It appeared that while Knowles focused upon something quite significant to adult learning, i.e. experience, his formulation was rather weak, not based upon extensive research findings, nor was it the total picture of adult learning. Indeed, it was not a psychological analysis of the learning process, it did not describe what aspects of experience are relevant, nor did it generate a learning sequence for an adult, so some of the claims that Knowles made for andragogy now appear to be rather suspect. (pp. 128-129)

In assessing the contribution of andragogy to our understanding of adult learning, Tennant (1997), concludes that "andragogy is not really a theory of adult learning at all. It is more a philosophical position on the aims of adult education" (p. 18). Although Knowles' concept of andragogy has met with criticism for, amongst other reasons, the foundations upon life cycle theory, the emphasis on individual learning without reference to social context, the concept of self-directedness, and its perspective of education as "the identification and elimination of deficits or 'gaps' in knowledge, performance, or self concept" (Tennant, 1997, p. 17), principles have remained core for many adult educators (Field, 2006; Taylor et al., 2000; Tennant, 1997). Knowles et al. (2005) respond to the critique however, "Experienced adult

learning professionals have learnt that, like most models, the andragogical learning principles are tempered by an array of other factors that affect learning behaviour” (p. 204).

Savicevic (2008) informs us that the discussion on andragogy as a separate discipline continues, currently with the following three main perspectives: in the USA there are those who continue to use andragogy as a model of learning where “ways of behavior in the processes of education and learning” are prescriptive (para. 5); a growing number of “followers” of andragogy as “an integral science of learning and education of adults” (para. 6) located mostly in Eastern and Central Europe, the USA and Canada; and thirdly, a school of thought that regards andragogy as unnecessary as the learning and education of adults is addressed in existing disciplines such as psychology and sociology. This then confirms that there continue to be at least three different approaches to andragogy in the contemporary context.

#### **4.2 Jarvis’s Model of Learning**

A more contemporary model of learning has been presented by Jarvis (2004) which regards the person in entirety, both mind and body, and the continuous nature of learning, “the complex relationship between learning and time” (p. 107). To Jarvis, the role of experience is not merely as a resource upon which to draw but all learning begins with experience; it is the whole person “knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and the senses - having a lifetime of experience - biography – who enters the situations and constructs the experiences” (2004, p. 106). When an experience is met in the social context that is not familiar or one that becomes problematic in some way, Jarvis labels this *disjuncture*, learning can commence. The disjuncture requires attention as it cannot be dealt with using the existing biographical repertoire and this then is where learning can occur or the person can decide to ignore the disjuncture and no learning occur.

When learning occurs the person is changed in some way, either cognitively, practically, or by experiencing emotionally (boxes 3-5 of Figure 3, p. 57) or any combination of these which produces different types of learning. Jarvis (2006, p. 17) notes three ways in which people are changed by learning:

- the person's self is changed mentally, emotionally and in terms of identity and self-confidence;
- the learner places new meaning on the world and events; and
- the learner is more experienced and more able to cope in similar situations and with similar problems.

Over time this learning also becomes part of the changed person who encounters new experiences in their social world that stimulates learning.

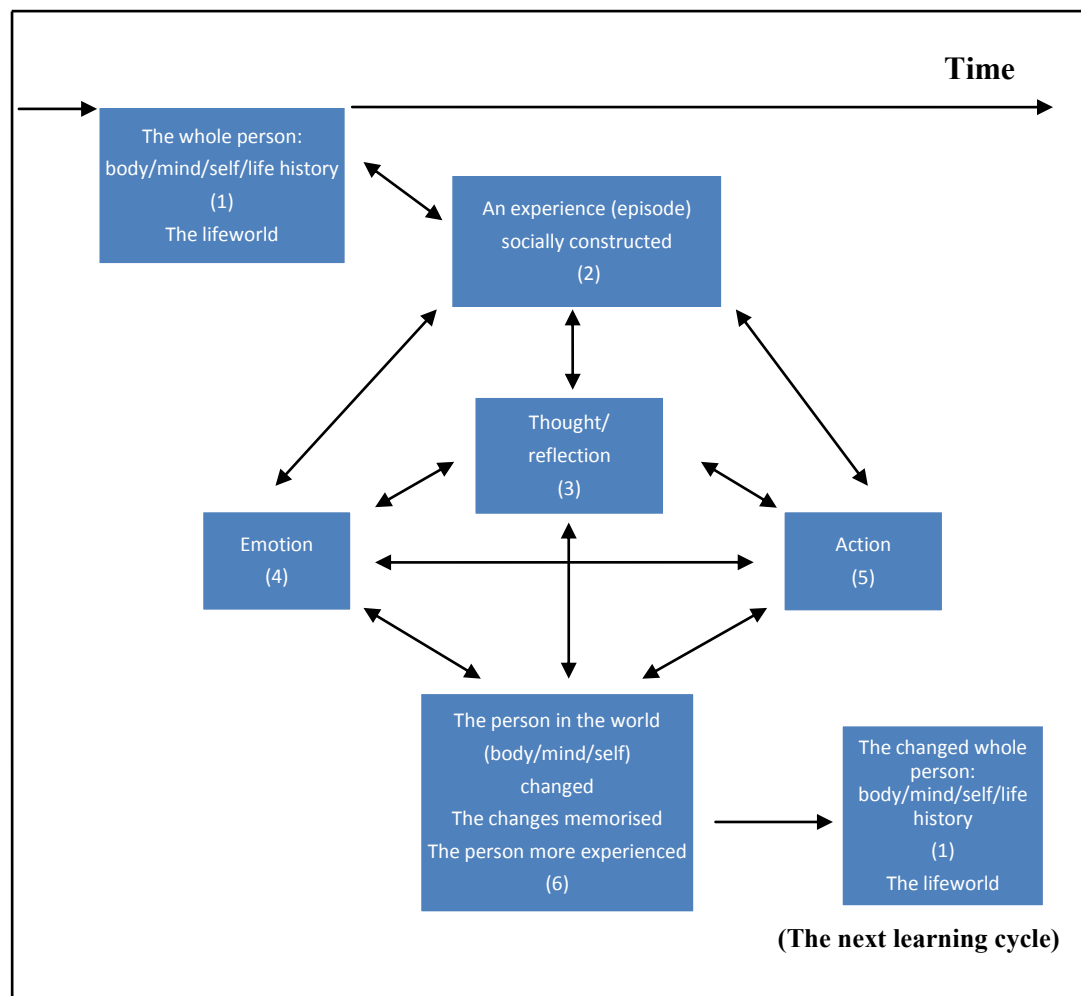


Figure 3. The transformation of the person through experience (Adapted from Jarvis, 2006, p. 16).

The importance of this model is in its attempt to capture the cyclical nature of learning in the flow of time, the learner as a whole person rather than a “cognitive machine” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 101), its acknowledgement of the essential nature



of both experience in learning and that learning is situated in a social context. The next section of this chapter explores the importance of context in learning as an adult in more detail.

### **4.3 Context in Learning**

With the rapid societal, economic and technological changes in the world, adults need to keep learning to “to function effectively in the changing world around them” (Taylor et al., 2000, p. 4) rather than relying on what they have learned or experienced in the past. Increasingly there is recognition that learning occurs in all aspects of life and in many contexts, as addressed in relation to the discussions on lifelong, life wide, and life based learning above. However, this is not always recognised as learning, as Foley (2004) notes, “All human activity has a learning dimension. People learn, continually, informally and formally, in many different settings: in workplaces, in families, through leisure activities, through community activities, and in political action” (p. 4).

Forms of learning have generally been categorised as formal, informal and non-formal with overlap occurring between these. Formal learning occurs where learning is undertaken through an organised programme of study at an institution or workplace which is recognised through a qualification; informal learning occurs where the learner or a group of learners initiate and carry out the learning in pursuit of their own interests; and non-formal learning which is organised outside a formal system as required, such as in community-based opportunities (Foley, 2004; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Foley also categorises incidental learning as the learning that occurs “by-product of other learning” (p. 53), such as developing public speaking skills when necessary for involvement in social activism. However, the nature and contexts of learning are being re-evaluated in light of the discourse of lifelong learning, as discussed above, when these dichotomies, such as formal-informal, seem inadequate in describing learning across all contexts or strata:

If learning is lifelong and life wide, what specifically then is a learning context?... in so far as we expand our context of learning to apparently embrace all strata of life, we might be said to lose the conceptual basis for talking specifically of a learning context? (Edwards, Biesta, & Thorpe, 2009, p. 1)

Coupled with the consideration of context there is a growing recognition in the literature of the necessity for an integrated approach to learning in adulthood which addresses the person as a whole where in the past there has been a tendency to assume a dichotomy between cognitive and physical processes, and those of the emotions. Gonczi (2004), comments that, “such a learning concept takes account of the affective, moral, physical as well as the cognitive aspects of individuals and insists that real learning takes place only in and through action” (p. 19).

In attempting to find a model of learning that adequately described the nature of the learning experiences of the informants involved in this study, other concepts were examined as those discussed to this point go some way towards clarifying our understanding of the participants’ experiences and yet do not address something of the essence of their experiences. The preceding concepts do not explicate the determination to proceed with, or the commitment to, English language learning and use in the light of the ongoing challenges, nor do they go far enough in describing the intrinsic motivations for learning or transformation that can occur as adults learn. As Taylor et al. (2000) note, “Though adults’ expressed purpose is usually to work toward pragmatic goals, thoughtful self-reflection often reveals more complex desires” (p. 9). It appeared to the researcher that other factors were also involved in the language learning of the participants.

In considering the role of context on learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) provide a social theory of learning and knowledge development from business management, the concept of situated learning, approaching learning in a different way from the traditional cognitive or developmental tradition (Tennant, 1997). People who share a concern or a passion for something they do regularly interact to learn how to do it better, the newcomer beginning in a new situation on the periphery of practice and, over time, moving to full participation and engagement. Learning is not considered as a separate activity but as an integral part of social practice and participation, where learning is placed “in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world” (Wenger, 1998, p. 3). Lave and Wagner (1991) assert that “learning, thinking and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world” (p. 51). Tennant (1997) clarifies that this

goes beyond learning by doing, rather “learning is not so much a matter of individuals acquiring mastery over knowledge and processes of reasoning’, but of participation as members of a socio-cultural community” (p. 74).

The experiences of adult learners and uses of ESL have very clear commonalities with those described above, where through their lived experiences of learning and using ESL they begin as newcomers on the periphery of practice, the new culture and language, moving to engagement as proficiency and confidence grow. For the participants in this study, the participation in a new socio-cultural community is made possible through learning and using English as a second language. There are essentially at two communities of practice in which learners are seeking to engage while learning English; that of the local community and that of the WCHO. However, the language learning process is not without challenges, the engagement with a socio-cultural community occurring as it does in a new culture thus adding another layer of complexity. The language learning experiences related by participants in this study were much richer than simply cognitive processes or development of technical skills, but rather impacted upon the self, upon the identity of the language learner.

While situated learning is one lens through which we can view the experiences of participants, learning can also affect the person in a deeper manner, as pointed out by Jarvis (2006) in the preceding section. From the discussion to this point it is clear that there are other areas of the literature that are necessary to explore to reach a fuller understanding of experiences of the participants in the study and it is to transformative learning theory that we move to in the following section.

#### **4.4 Learning that Transforms**

When adults learn there is potential for significant change. In exploring the changes that can occur, Mezirow initially introduced the theory of transformative or transformational learning in 1978 with discussion continuing through the 1990s. Mezirow states in the preface to his 2009 publication that transformative learning is now the “dominant teaching paradigm discussed within the field of adult education” (Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009, p. xi). Mezirow (in Mezirow et al., 2009) defines transformative learning as “learning that transforms problematic frames of

reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change” (p. 22). The assertion made is that learning can bring about transformation in the *frames of reference*, “the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 16), with which we interpret experiences in our lives, and which guide our opinions and actions (Apte, 2009; Taylor, 2008). These frames of reference are generally unconscious processes, often collectively held; unintentionally assimilated from those around us as part of growing up within a culture and community. In adulthood, frames of references that are revealed as inadequate or no longer valid undergo transformation upon critical reflection to become more dependable, justifiable or valid: “If our current meaning perspectives cannot accommodate or make meaning of the experience, through critical reflection we can change our perspective” (Courtenay, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998, p. 66).

The process of transformative learning is distinguishable from usual learning as it involves interaction between the unconscious and conscious (Dirkx, 2001). Change occurs in these frames of reference when adults reflect critically on assumptions made or on problem solving processes; when they consider for themselves the reasons for making judgements rather than accepting and functioning on the values or beliefs predetermined by others, “Transformative learning occurs when there is a transformation in one of our beliefs or attitudes (a meaning scheme), or a transformation of our entire perspective (habit of mind)” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 133). Changing these frames of references is considered positively in the literature and teachers of adult learners are generally encouraged by the literature to aim to facilitate transformation. Transformative learning can occur in different circumstances and contexts, including the classroom. Educators can facilitate the process of transformation as they assist the learner to reflect critically in dialogue either individually or within a learning group context.

Not all learning is transformative, however. Learning can add knowledge to our meaning schemes, extending and developing those that are already in place (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 133). Learning may also be focused on the development of technical skills before realistic applications are made. It has been observed that while some people are predisposed to change, others are resistant or face barriers to change with

Mezirow and Associates (2000) also noting that not all people engaged in critical reflection experience transformative learning. Experiences in general, but disorienting or critical experiences in particular, can initiate transformation by provoking a critique of assumptions (Apte, 2009; Mezirow et al., 2009). The experiences undergone by the participants in this study of moving to and living in a new culture for an extended length of time can be described as disorienting, participants commenting on the challenges to their thinking they encountered moving to and living in a new context. Tisdell (2003) commented on the affects of exposure to new contexts:

When one is confronted with new ideas and ways of thinking about the world, through travel, higher education, involvement in social or political movements, or interaction with people who are different, one is likely to rethink some of one's own previously held assumptions and ideas. (p. 100)

Mezirow and Associates (2000, p. 22) identify ten phases that transformation may include, although not in any exact sequence:

- a disorienting dilemma;
- self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame;
- a critical assessment of assumptions;
- recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared;
- exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
- planning a course of action;
- acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;
- provisional trying of new roles;
- building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and
- a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

The starting point for transformative learning is what the "learner wants to learn" (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 31) which initiates the four main elements of transformation process: "experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse and action" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 134). It is worth noting that discourse in the context

of transformative learning is considered to be dialogue: “that specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, pp. 10-11).

When transformative learning occurs, people recognise that they have changed and that their meaning perspectives are new, although it is suggested that the nature of these changes or the experience of the transformative process differs according to psychological preferences (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). These changes are described as epochal (dramatic) or incremental and it is observed that people may experience the process of transformation differently and, as stated above that not all people experience transformation even when engaged in critical reflection (Mezirow & Associates, 2000).

Scholars involved in transformative learning theory in recent years have been involved in attending to areas of the theory that were not adequately addressed: the place of context in transformative learning; considering the importance of non-rational ways of knowing, particularly affective learning; the place of critical reflection in transformation, and transformation that occurs in the absence of critical reflection; the role of relationships; “the nature of the relationship between individuals and social change” (Merriam, et al. 2007, p. 158); and the place of the educator in facilitating transformative learning. Context in transformative learning has been investigated by Kovan and Dirkx (2003) who observe that the context of the everyday provides opportunities for transformative learning. Importantly, Dirkx (2001) contends that learning that transforms does not necessarily require events that are out of the ordinary or that reflect we reflect deeply, but that “Dramatic opportunities for transformative learning reside in imaginative engagement with the everydayness of our lives” ( p. 16), and it is the everyday experiences which provide a “ rich context for developing a deeper understanding of the strong existential, emotional, and spiritual struggle involved in the process” (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003, p. 103).

To some of those who participated in this study, what could be called the everyday experiences of learning and using English provided the catalyst for transformation. Living in another culture challenges preconceived ideas but also, for some

participants, the change in daily routine, more time spent with spouses and family in a new environment and the changes in relationships that this brought about, provided the environment or the impetus for transformation to occur. The following section continues to pursue transformative learning theory as applied to adult second language learners, and therefore to the participants in this study, specifically.

#### **4.5 Adult Second Language Learning and Transformation**

Having considered the literature on transformative learning it can be seen that there are clear parallels between the experiences of adult learners in other settings and those of the adult second language learner. As has been noted previously, the experience of the adult second language learner sits at the confluence in the literature of the discourses of adult and transformative learning, second language acquisition, and English language teaching, with connections also to cultural studies, each of which recognises the changes in identity that result when adults learn. This seems to indicate that there is potential for transformation occurring when adults learn ESL, as King (2000) notes, “there seems to be a natural bridge between transformational learning and the adult ESL experience” (p. 71).

King (2000) comments that the transformations experienced by adult ESL learners who participated in her study “had great impact and were far-reaching” (p. 75), with three themes of perspective transformation identified from analysis of data collected: language learning, cultural and personal change. Changes that occurred in their language learning involved evaluation of the learners’ own preconceived ideas of ELL and identification of similarities and differences between the L1 and English. Cultural changes identified were that the learners learned about the host culture and were able to identify the development of their own intercultural awareness, “they became more aware of and appreciative of people from other cultures” (p. 76). King’s third theme was that of personal change and this involved the recognition by learners that they had gained greater self-esteem and empowerment affecting “what they did, how they related to others, and how they thought about themselves” (King, 2000, p. 77)

King’s (2000) conclusions reflect those of Foster (1997) who investigated the experience of adults enrolled in a language course in their home country and who has

suggested factors that contribute to transformative learning occurring in the context of adults learning a second language. One factor identified as a catalyst for change is that of a destabilising or disorienting event which can initiate transformation by provoking evaluation of assumptions that have been made, as discussed earlier. Foster regards the vulnerability and anxiety that second language learners feel as a contributory factor to transformative learning, commenting that language learning through the exploration of the target language culture including music, literature, film can be “destabilizing” (Foster, 1997, p. 35).

Foster (1997) also describes the significance of learner motivation for second language learning, distinguishing between integrative and instrumental motivation. Where the learner’s motivation is instrumental the learner seeks individual benefits that are not interpersonal, such as improved employment prospects or career advancement. Foster observes that when motivation is integrative and the learner would like to become associated with the other language community or there is a sense of identification with the target language group, transformative learning can be experienced early in the language learning process.

The role played by the facilitator in transformative learning is regarded as essential, King (2000) suggesting that “the formal educational experience may entail introducing means of coping with personal changes in perspective and/or worldview” (p. 83). The section that follows considers approaches second language teachers adopt specifically to facilitate transformation occurring as adult second language learners participate in the classroom context.

#### **4.6 Fostering Transformation: Approaches for ELT**

Perhaps the first consideration for the English language teacher is whether or not they would choose to teach in a way that facilitates transformation. Merriam et al. (2007) question the lack of attention that has been paid to ethical issues involved in teaching with the goal of fostering transformation stating that “Ethical and professional considerations pervade the process, a process that most adult educators are little prepared to handle” (p. 156).



As has already been stated, not all learning is transformative but can develop technical skills, or add knowledge to, confirm or develop existing frames of reference. In the literature a number of elements that contribute to or foster transformation generally have been identified and a number that relate specifically to the second language learning process. Although specific strategies have been identified that facilitate transformative learning, it is acknowledged that the educator requires knowledge of the theoretical orientation of transformative learning to ensure that the elements are not applied arbitrarily (Mezirow & Associates, 2009). Foster (1997) concurs, recognising that “the instructor ... must be knowledgeable about the process of transformative learning as it pertains to language learning” (p. 37).

The role that the teacher/trainer/facilitator plays in a transformative approach to teaching is, then, regarded as essential. In addition to the core elements of transformative learning, namely individual experience, critical reflection, dialogue and action, the essential teaching components of a holistic approach, awareness of context and authentic practice have been appended. These elements are interdependent and are still evolving as further research is conducted. Mezirow, Taylor and Associates (2009) note the interdependent nature of these elements:

Without individual experience, there is nothing to engage in critical reflection. Similarly, developing an authentic practice is significant for fostering trusting relationships between learners and teacher, which often provides the safe environment for learners to engage in critical reflection, ultimately allowing transformative learning to take place. (p. 4)

It is also acknowledged that there remain many unknowns to the practice of encouraging transformative learning.

Individual experience “the primary medium of transformative learning” (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 5) includes prior experience, the current experiences of the learners and the classroom experience as created by the teacher. Experience provides material for dialogue and on which to reflect and as such the depth of life experience is of consequence, with deeper life experiences providing richer material with which to engage. Critical reflection on classroom content that is value-laden and intense experiential activities can facilitate change by “acting as triggers or disorienting

dilemmas, provoking critical reflection, and facilitating transformative learning, allowing learners to experience learning more directly and holistically” (Mezirow et al., p. 7). To foster transformative learning learners are encouraged to engage in critical reflection, the “questioning the integrity of deeply held assumptions and beliefs based on prior experience” (Mezirow et al., p. 7). Three types of reflection have been identified by Mezirow: *content reflection* which involves thinking about the experience; *process reflection* in which problem solving strategies are employed to deal with the experience; and *premise reflection*, the foundation of critical reflection where presuppositions about the experience or problem are examined (Merriam et al., 2007; Mezirow et al., 2009).

Dialogue, the third core element that fosters transformation, is where critical reflection is “put into action, where experience is reflected on, assumptions and beliefs are questioned, and habits of mind are ultimately transformed” (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 9). As indicated earlier, dialogue in the transformative discourse is centred on communication occurring in trusting relationships. This requires that instructors create an environment that is conducive to dialogue that enables learners to stretch beyond the edges of their knowing, and to experience the discomfort of doing so in a supportive context: “it involves an acute awareness of learner’s attitudes, feelings, personalities, and preferences over time, and as signs of change and instability begin to emerge, educators can respond accordingly” (Mezirow et al., p. 10).

Engaging a holistic teaching approach involves embracing cognitive, affective and relational ways of knowing as these are interdependent processes. In practice, instructors provide opportunities for all aspects of the person to be engaged in the classroom, and by this “we mean the person in fullness of being: as an affective, intuitive, thinking, physical, spiritual self” (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 11). To best achieve this teachers integrate a diverse range of learning opportunities incorporating aspects of the arts such as movement, music, or storying alongside other activities to foster awareness of emotions, which can act as the catalyst for reflection, and to facilitate the exploration of emotions.

An awareness of the context in which the learning occurs involves the teacher understanding factors that influence the learners such as their personal situations and the wider social influences that shape the learning context. It may be factors in the wider context such as financial or time constraints or the demands of programs that prevent or inhibit transformative learning occurring, Mezirow et al. (2009) commenting that, “It seems that the very conditions that foster transformative learning - a democratic process, inclusiveness of agendas, striving for consensus, critical reflection, dialogue - create a high demand for time” (p. 13).

Another essential element of teaching to facilitate transformative learning is the establishment of genuine or authentic relationships between teacher/instructor and learner. This stands to reason when the other core elements described above involve building trust and understanding of individuals and their contexts. Trusting and supportive relationships within the classroom context build learner confidence and facilitate open sharing and honest discussion. Mezirow et al. (2009) state that “without the medium of relationships, critical reflection is impotent and hollow, lacking the genuine discourse necessary for thoughtful and in-depth reflection” (p. 13). Authentic relationships entail for the teacher both self awareness and awareness of learner needs and an engagement with other core elements described in this section.

When considering the facilitation of transformative learning in ELL, the role of the language instructor is one of particular importance due to the complex nature of second language learning coupled with the challenges of learning as an adult, Foster (1997) maintaining that “the role of the instructor becomes even more critical than in other settings” (p. 37). Foster provides an insightful consideration of the role of the language instructor whom she regards as “not only the provider of information but also the buffer between the learner and the language experience”. To Foster (1997), the second language instructor is not only an authority in the SLA but also understands the manner in which cognitive and affective aspects of language learning interact. Foster (1997) also emphasises the importance of an integrated approach which takes into account learner needs and introduces them to “the multifaceted dimensions of language – its expression, its rhythm, and its culture” (p. 34), through the creation of a learning environment “that is rich and diverse, offering activities

and strategies suitable to a wide range of learning styles and learner profiles” (p. 39). Learners engage with the target language through diverse methods and authentic language experiences in a natural manner. In this way, Foster (1997) maintains, they “experience success because they are meeting their goals, seeing an immediate application of their learning, and experiencing a validation of their personal abilities” (p. 37) with transformative learning experienced alongside the development of technical skills. Working with authentic language activities allows learners to consider both the target language and culture while comparing it with their own, thus, as Foster (1997) remarks, “Learners are taken to another phase of learning: while mastering the language skills by discussing what they saw, heard, or read, they are also talking about who they are” (p. 39).

Results from the study undertaken by King (2000) identified specific learning activities that contributed to transformation in what King called a “synergistic link among discussions, writing, and perspective transformation” (p. 80). Active learning through class discussions, class activities, essays and assigned readings facilitated “dramatically new ways of thinking about themselves and their world” (King, 2000, p. 80) through reflection and risk taking. Mezirow et al. (2009) concur with the effectiveness of a written format in promoting critical reflection, particularly journal writing. Learners also noted that, during the period of change, support they received from teachers, family, friends, other students and their spouses was of importance with King (2000) commenting that “important to these learners were the transparency, enduring encouragement and hope that they saw in their teachers... From the learner’s perspective the person and personality of adult educators are not separated from their professional responsibilities” (p. 81).

The disorienting dilemmas that were identified in King’s (2001) study as contributing to perspective transformation were life changes including immigration, moving, change of job, marriage and the death of a loved one. However, on a smaller scale involving learners in new or unfamiliar experiences with a culturally diverse group could also be considered disorienting experiences. In the lives of individuals it would seem that there could be many contributory factors to learning that is transformative.

#### 4.7 Individuation

Links between transformative learning and the Jungian concept of individuation emerge in the work of Dirkx who regards individuation as a framework with which to relate transformation to the process of personality development or the “emergence of the self” (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 103). Individuation describes the lifelong process of developing as an individual to become differentiated from the cultural collective, to become “who we truly are” (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003, p. 103) or as Taylor describes “a lifelong journey of coming to understand oneself” (Mezirow, Taylor, & Associates, 2009, p. 25). This involves a dialogue between the conscious and unconscious which enables the learner to “gain insight into aspects of themselves that are outside conscious awareness but influence their sense of self, as well as their interpretations and actions” (Mezirow et al., 2009, p. 25).

It is concluded that the process of individuation also includes the recognition of the person’s connections to the community, Kovan and Dirkx (2003) stating that “We begin to see ourselves not as alone, isolated individuals participating in life by ourselves but rather as deeply interconnected to all of life” (p. 103). This involves the deliberate conscious choice of “our own way” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 189) which then allows the person to participate in discourse with others fully and in an authentic manner. According to Taylor (2008), individuation “involves discovery of new talents, a sense of empowerment and confidence, a deeper understanding of one’s inner self, and a greater sense of self-responsibility” (p. 7). Interestingly, Taylor (2008) notes that for the psychoanalytic perspective “transformative learning is seen as a process of individuation” (p. 7).

In the process of individuation *meaning making*, the process in which adults engage to make sense of the experiences of everyday, occurs incessantly (Courtenay et al., 1998, p. 65). To Taylor (2008), the compulsion to make meaning of everyday lives is considered an “instinctive drive” (p. 5), necessary in adulthood to develop, explore and validate beliefs and make informed decisions. Although meaning-making occurs constantly to a greater or lesser extent, it has been generally accepted that to engender learning requires critical reflection (Taylor et al., 2000). It would seem that daily meaning making can be regarded as the means by which the process of individuation occurs over the period of a person’s adulthood.

Attention has been drawn, as with andragogy, to the almost exclusive focus of this initial perspective of transformational learning on the individual learner without regard to context and social change or to other aspects of the self that may be involved:

Transformative learning theory pushes to include the sociocultural and personal dimensions of learning, yet the deeper emotional and spiritual dimensions of learning, those aspects which we heard so loudly in the activists' stories, is an underdeveloped component. (Kovan, 2001 p. 116)

Transformative learning has now, according to Taylor (2008), branched into a number of "alternative conceptions" (p. 7) including the social-cultural and cultural-spiritual perspectives which broaden the approach to learning. Mezirow et al. (2009) regard these as different orientations: one emphasizes personal transformation through critical reflection that is focused on the self with "little attention given to the role of context and social change in the transformative experience" (p. 5); the other emphasizes individual and social transformation where critical reflection is ideological critique and "learners develop an awareness of power and greater agency .... to transform society and their own reality" (p. 5). Taylor (2008) describes this latter orientation, the cultural-spiritual view of transformative learning that has commonality with activism in its origins in the work of Friere and its consideration of people as subjects "continually reflecting and acting on the transformation of their world so it can become a more equitable place for all to live" (Taylor, p. 8). This perspective of transformative learning values and encourages cross-cultural relationships and what is described as a "spiritually grounded approach" (Taylor, 2008, p. 9). It is this spiritual aspect of learning in adulthood with its links to transformational learning that will be considered in more detail in the following section.

#### **4.8 The Role of Spirituality in Learning in Adulthood**

The term spirituality has been mentioned several times in the discussion of learning in adulthood to this point. The nature of spirituality and the place and importance of the spiritual in adult experiences of learning are currently being considered in a number of discourses, particularly adult education, workplace and human resource

development, life-long learning and transformative learning as mentioned previously. Dei (2002) acknowledges that whilst within cultures and even communities there are different views of spirituality, “There is a place for spirituality and spiritual knowledge in the construction of subjectivity and identity” (p. 2). Participants in this study spoke of a spiritual dimension in conjunction with their experiences of learning and using English, Merriam et al. (2007) acknowledging that, “To the extent that spirituality is about meaning-making; it can be argued that it has a place in adult learning” (p. 204).

Similarities can be observed between the responses of informants in this study and the learning experiences of activists described by Ollis (2008), who contends that learning practices may not only be social and informal but *embodied*: “embedded in the everyday interactions of practice” with others and is “intrinsically connected to the mind, the physical body, and the emotions” (p. 332). Thus, embodied learning in action recognizes that passion, anger, frustration and a “desire for a better world” drive motivation and action (Ollis, 2008, p. 329). Activism is delineated as “a process whereby individuals act to have an impact on significant social change” and an activist as “a member of a social movement, popular struggle, trade union, collective, network, NGO, or civic or religious organization, a scholar or student, or an individual unaffiliated with any group” (Ollis, 2008, p. 317). Foley (2004) describes radical social action in similar terms as “radical social action requires the purposeful engagement of a group: learning, and acting collectively for some agreed greater social goal... to bring some social change” (pp. 252-253).

This acknowledgement of the embodied nature of learning helps account for the potential for depth or richness of learning as an adult when the experience goes beyond cognitive processes and involves other aspects of the person. In a study of environmental activists conducted by Kovan and Dirkx (2003), the respondents commented on a spiritual dimension to their learning and that their learning maintained their long-term commitment and passion to the activities in which they were involved and which they described as their calling. Writing of environmentalists working for non-profit organizations, Kovan (2001) describes such people as “working for the common good” or people with “commitment” and also asserts that a theme arising from the study was the “common conception of having a

vocation or calling. Persons with vocational orientations were found to derive their rewards and motivations from internal considerations” (p. 8). According to Kovan and Dirkx (2003), those who consider work as vocation found meaning in their involvements and a personal expression of the self intertwined with activities that have meaning and purpose in the social context. Participants in their study acknowledged enhanced self-esteem, confidence and strength of commitment resulting from their involvements in their activities with Kovan and Dirkx noting the interrelatedness of “the emotional and spiritual dimensions of transformative learning, its relationship to a sense of calling, and the essential mystery at the core of this process” (2003, p. 103) and summarised that this was also connected to the self. Ollis (2008) similarly concludes that, “There is a strong sense of spirituality and emotional commitment that drives their activism. These activists believe that they are meant to be there” (p. 321). This also illustrates the importance of personal spiritual beliefs and the sense of a higher power and/or purpose which relates to the second language learning processes of the participants in this study.

Tisdell (2003) comments that, although spirituality and religion are not the same, for many people they are related, and that personal spirituality may or may not be expressed through a formalised religion. Tacey (2011) notes that whereas spirituality traditionally has been intrinsic to formalised religion, in contemporary discussion it has become contrasted to religion. Bennet and Bennet (2007) describe spirituality as “the elevation of the mind as related to intellect and matters of soul reflected in thought and action” (p. 2). To Tisdell and Tolliver (2001) “spirituality is more about one’s personal belief and experience of a higher power or higher purpose” (p. 13). From studies investigating spirituality in higher education conducted with adult educators Tisdell and Tolliver (2001) note three main themes: the further development of self awareness; a sense of the interconnectedness of all things and a relationship to a higher power.

A common theme throughout the discourses of transformational learning, activism and individuation is the focus on meaning-making in adult learning as intricately related to the spiritual quest of adults. Connections between the discussions in transformative learning, activism and spirituality can be found where, in the process of individuation, scholars describe an increasing awareness of the inner workings of



the self and a “recognition and integration of conscious and unconscious elements of oneself” (Kovan and Dirkx, 2003, p. 103). To Tisdell (2003), spirituality is concerned with the way people make meaning in their lives, yet for some also gives meaning and a general purpose to their lives. Tisdell (2003) relates that for many adults spirituality is a “major organizing principle” in their lives and impacts the values they hold, their behaviour and the significant choices that they make including their choice of work or “the kinds of work that they see as their vocation” and that as a result, “individuals do what they feel called to do – what gives their lives meaning” (p. 31). To Tacey (2011) also, the term spirituality describes the personal search for meaning and although the term itself was borrowed from religion it is still a term that is applied appropriately to the personal search for the sacred.

Another statement made by Tisdell (2003) echoes the discussions on individuation to this point in this chapter in that spiritual development is regarded as progress towards a more authentic identity and sense of self: “Authenticity in this sense means having a sense that one is operating more from a sense of self that is defined by one’s own self as opposed to being defined by other people’s expectations” (p. 32), and that this also brings a growing awareness of others and sense of communal responsibility. Tacey (2011) concurs, remarking that the spiritual has traditionally brought people together as the spirit seeks communal fellowship. This again links to the discussion above from the transformative learning discourse around the topic of activism in particular. Tisdell (2003) however, notes that the spirituality of her respondents brought with it a sense of collective responsibility which compelled them to work for “social justice or greater equity in the world” (p. 41). It would seem that the process of individuation, the constant process of identity development which continues throughout our adulthood, is regarded by some as spiritual in nature, as a “spiritual journey” as Tisdell (2003) comments, “Claiming and reclaiming who we are now, according to our own beliefs and values, is a process of ongoing identity development that many have described as a spiritual experience or spiritual journey” (p. 140).

## **4.9 Conclusion**

Negotiating a path through the literature for this chapter has been for the researcher not unlike opening doors, each connected, and each taking the reader further into deeper insights of the experiences of the participants. What began as a consideration of models opened to reveal the exploration of the inner concerns of the person and begins to explain for the researcher, the changes seen in learners and shared by the participants.

As noted in the introduction, second language learning has so often been regarded from the perspective of the acquiring of code, yet the literature, which is reflected in the experience of the participants, reveals that English language learning can provide enriching experiences that can be transformative in the lives of adult learners. Exploring the literature while simultaneously collecting and collating data was exhilarating to the researcher as one reflected the other and it became apparent that experience has the potential to be, not simply a matter of gaining skills or developing proficiency, but to be significant in contributing positively to the growth of the people involved.

## **4.10 Summary**

The preceding three chapters have presented a review of the literature that is relevant to this study, providing the context for the research with this fourth chapter bringing the review to a conclusion. The literature has considered appropriate literature from three discourses that converge in the experiences of participants in this study: second language learning, English language teaching and global English, and learning adulthood. Chapter four has presented a discussion of the following:

- the place of andragogy and its contribution to the development of the model of learning presented by Jarvis with its acknowledgement of the importance of context;
- a discussion of learning that brings about transformation;
- transformation in the context of adult second language learning;
- approaches to ELT that may engender transformation;
- transformation in the process of individuation; and
- the spiritual as a dimension of individuation in adult learning.

The thesis progresses to chapter five which describes the research methodology that was adopted for the study with the development of hermeneutic phenomenology and the regard for *text* explored. This is followed by a rationale for the data gathering and analysis methods utilised in this study.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Research Methodology**

According to van Manen (1997), methodology “refers to the philosophical framework, the fundamental assumptions and characteristics” of the researcher’s perspective; it is the “theory behind the method” (p. 27). The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology adopted in this study of the lived experiences of adult learners and users of English as a second language within an international organization. The choice of research methods will be discussed and justified and the research methods described. The chapter begins with an explanation of the research objectives upon which this study is constructed.

The study has its foundations in hermeneutic phenomenology and accordingly the chapter explores the development of hermeneutics and phenomenology as separate methods of enquiry before being amalgamated by van Manen to form hermeneutic phenomenology, the philosophical approach on which this study is based. This is followed by a consideration of the definition of text, a central notion of the study, and a description of the manner in which text will be delineated for this study. The rationale for the selection of the sample is then presented before the data collection methods utilised for the study will be discussed in detail. A brief overview of the methods employed to analyse the qualitative data generated by the study will be given before the chapter closes with a summary.

#### **5.1 Researcher Perspective**

As has been stated previously, this project is situated in a constructivist paradigm and as such the research objectives and methodologies chosen for this study are reflections of the researcher’s perspective and the aim to gain closer understanding of experiences as regarded by the participants. For the constructivist, multiple realities exist, each unique constructions of individuals “who experience the world from their own vantage points” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15), although there are aspects that are shared. To the constructivist, knowledge is constructed socially and “meaning does not exist in its own right; rather it is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation” (O’Leary, 2004, p. 10), Burns (1994) remarking that, “Qualitative

research has made educators realise that reality should never be taken for granted, given that attention must be paid to the multiple realities and socially constructed meanings that exist within every social context” (p. 12).

The researcher also recognises that the data generated in this study could be interpreted in other ways, as according to van Manen (1997), “A phenomenological description is always one interpretation, and no single interpretation of human experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complementary, or even richer or deeper description” (p. 31). Rich or thick description provides details that give the reader a “strong sense of the particular realities involved” (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 16), helping to bring a closer understanding of the phenomenon under consideration.

It is acknowledged that these understandings and consequently the interpretation of the data generated by this study will be influenced by the researcher’s own social world, including culture and worldview. The research process is one of co-construction between researcher and participant and this has the implication that “it is impossible and undesirable for researchers to be distant and objective. It is through mutual engagement that researchers and respondents construct the subjective reality that is under investigation” (Hatch, 2002, p. 15). Hatch (2002) also notes that, “Instead of pretending to be objective, the stance of qualitative researchers is to concentrate on reflexively applying their own subjectivities in ways that make it possible to understand the tacit motives and assumptions of their participants” (p. 9). Although the constructivist openly acknowledges the subjective element of the qualitative research process this does not equate to a haphazard approach to research, but rather research is regarded as “an activity that needs to be approached with both discipline and rigour” (O’Leary, 2004, p. 59) with quality and consistency maintained.

While acknowledging the essential contribution that subjectivity makes to the research process in enabling the researcher and reader to understand or come closer to an understanding of the experiences of others, there is the potential for researcher bias to occur in qualitative studies when the researcher’s “biases assumptions, or beliefs are intruding into the analysis” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 97) due to the

close relationship of researcher and participants. There is the possibility in qualitative projects that data may be interpreted in a particular way as a result of the insider position sought by the researcher (Punch, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), or as Punch explains “the very nature of the teacher-researcher’s insider position may bring about the risk of subjectivity and bias.” (2009, p. 44). O’Leary (2004, p. 57) comments that the issue of importance is not whether the researcher is or is not subjective, but rather whether the subjectivity is recognised and the manner in which any potential biases are managed.

While this may be considered more of an issue for the qualitative researcher, it is acknowledged that all researchers approach their work from some position and that any approach has strengths and weaknesses (Punch, 2009). It is beneficial to take into consideration Corbin and Holt’s (2005) comment that, “Though a researcher brings a perspective to the research... these perspectives guide the question and influence interpretations. They don’t drive the research” (p. 51). The analytic tools we employ enable us to consider the data at levels deeper than face value, and “it is the analytical tools we choose that help the researcher increase sensitivity to the data and help recognise bias” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 87).

In this study the researcher adopts a stance to subjectivity between both neutrality and subjectivity with transparency, as described by O’Leary (2004, p. 58). To O’Leary (2004), the indicator *neutrality* recognises and negotiates subjectivity to avoid bias while the indicator *subjectivity with transparency* discloses and accepts the subjective positioning of the researcher and how it may impact on the research. In this study the researcher acknowledges the influence of the subjective in the choice of methodologies and research design yet also the desire to keep findings and conclusions free from bias by employing strategies to ensure consistency and credibility of the research process.

To enable the evaluation of the quality of the qualitative research project in the constructivist paradigm, the criteria credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability or auditability have been developed to reflect quantitative concerns (Hatch, 2002; O’Leary, 2004). Dependability in a qualitative study can be ensured through methods that are consistent, systematic and well documented. Auditability

refers to the full explication of processes so that the reader is fully informed about the context in which the research was conducted, the participants, the data collection methods and analysis processes (O’Leary, 2004). In this study the detailed description of people and processes provided ensures auditability of the research conducted and the full documentation of processes undertaken ensures dependability.

Transferability indicates the applicability of the knowledge or understanding gained to other contexts. This study does not claim to be transferable across the population or in other contexts; however there may be insights gained that can be taken to other contexts. The study provides us with understandings of the perceptions of the respondents at the time the interviews were conducted and the protocol writing texts constructed and as such has a temporal aspect. However, the experiences of learning and using English are not static and will change and develop over time as the respondents move into different contexts and different roles. It is anticipated that the detailed description of the research context and methods implemented in this study provide adequate detail for the reader to decide on the applicability of the methodology to other particular contexts (O’Leary, 2004).

In any qualitative study, it is imperative to ensure the credibility of the results produced and this can be established “through strategies that ensure thoroughness and seek confirmation” (O’Leary, 2004, p. 114). Strategies were adopted in this study to ensure consistency in approach to each aspect of the research process, and consistency of the methods employed, to ensure clarity and accuracy in presenting the details of the research. These strategies included the utilisation of triangulation in data collection procedures and of thematic analysis and grounded theory in data analysis. The methodology adopted for this study is explicated fully and sequentially to provide readers with details required to be fully informed about the study context, the phenomenon investigated, and processes undertaken (Freebody, 2003; O’Leary, 2004).

Triangulation, the use of more than one data collection procedure to confirm the authenticity of each source, enhances consistency and helps avoid an overreliance on one method of data collection. Through the employment of more than one method the researcher can be confident about findings where outcomes of the different

methods applied to the same phenomena correspond or converge (Burns, 1994; Freebody, 2003; O’Leary, 2004). In this study both face to face interviews and protocol writing were employed to generate and collect data, and overall the data did converge and were able to be categorised together where commonalities in experiences were noted. The guiding questions for protocol writing included questions on the organizational experience of the participants to reflect the different context in which they were situated and from which they were responding (Appendix C). Freebody (2003) observes the importance of including anomalous evidence when reporting results: “Disconfirming or anomalous evidence is important, and its analysis and explanation are important indices of reliability and validity for the reader” (p. 77) and in this study any anomalies were noted in the coding process and comments included in the results as appropriate.

## **5.2 Research Objectives**

The research objectives on which this study is based dictated the form that the study would take, the research methodologies and data analysis methods that were adopted to fulfil the objectives. The three research objectives are explained in detail in the following section.

*Research Objective One: To explore the routine experiences of adult learners and users of English as a second or additional language.*

An examination of the everyday experiences of adult NNSE may seem mundane and trivial, but it is these experiences that lead to understanding the phenomenon of second language learning and usage from the perspectives of those who have been involved. In relating their own experiences, the responses from the participants in this study can assist others to understand what learning and using English as a second language is like for them. Respondents participated either in a written format through the creation of one off written texts in response to guiding questions or through a face to face interview. Analysis and interpretation of data generated will facilitate the development of understanding for those involved in teaching or working with those who are learning and using English as a second or additional language. It is hoped that the findings from this study will inform the practice of English



language teachers, team members, and leadership at various levels within the organization.

*Research Objective Two: To examine the lived experience of personnel within an international organization who use English as their second or additional language.*

In considering the lived experience of people working for the WCHO, the data sought were those that would describe the personal experiences of the respondents in relation to their use of English. The concept of lived experience is one that is fundamental to this thesis and will be considered in detail in subsequent sections of this chapter. The participants were all involved in an international organization, and their experiences are directly related to WCHO contexts, either as trainees studying ESL or as volunteers working in multicultural teams in their COS. As such, insights gained from this research objective will assist those who work in multicultural teams within the organization to develop a deeper understanding of the nature of the experiences of others.

*Research Objective Three: to consider the significance of the findings for ELT pedagogy.*

Pedagogical concerns are central to researcher as an ELT practitioner and are central to hermeneutic phenomenology. Findings from analysis of the data combined with the related literature presents aspects of significance to English language teaching that will be addressed with the aim of facilitating the further development of thoughtful practice. Strategies that may facilitate language proficiency will also be explored to enable better outcomes for English language learners.

### **5.3 Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

This study of the lived experience of adults learning and using English as a second language is situated within a hermeneutic phenomenological approach as was outlined by van Manen (1997). This methodology amalgamates hermeneutics and phenomenology, which developed separately over centuries of textual analysis. Hermeneutic methodology is based on the interpretation of phenomenon while phenomenological methodology describes the nature of everyday experience. Hermeneutic phenomenology assumes that “multiple, socially constructed realities exist and that the meanings individuals give to their experiences ought to be the

objects of study” (Hatch, 2002, p. 30). As a research method, hermeneutic phenomenology has been found effective in many different discourses particularly nursing, education and other social sciences. An overview of the distinct elements of these two methodologies follows, providing understanding of the aptness of their amalgamation.

### 5.3.1 The development of Hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics began as a methodology for interpreting legal matters and theological texts, gradually being developed by 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) into a more encompassing basis for general textual interpretation, regardless of the subject matter. A number of writers and philosophers, including German historian, sociologist, and psychologist Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), worked to develop hermeneutics as a recognised interpretive method for human sciences. It was Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and later Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), who transformed hermeneutics, considering hermeneutics as coalesced with phenomenology in its aims to uncover or “lay-bare” an entity with which we are already familiar (Heidegger, 1962; Malpas, 2005).

Acknowledged as one of the most influential philosophers of the twentieth century, the single focus of Heidegger’s works was the question of *Being* better understood in English as the infinitive *to be* hence the use of a capital letter (Gelven, 1989; Korab-Karpowicz, 2006). Heidegger revolutionized ontology by treating the meaningfulness of existence as a priori, thus changing the ontological question asked from “does this (thing) exist?” to “what does it mean to exist?” (Gelven, 1989, p. 7). Heidegger called this the “Being-Question” and considered it the fundamental question (Heidegger, 1962, p. 24). Heidegger reunified Being, uniting the knower and the world that is known, where traditionally they had been considered as separate entities. To Heidegger, Being entails existing in the world, involvement with the world, or “Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 63). Gelven (1989) comments that this *Being-in-the-world* is a characteristic of our existence as people and indicates our care and concern for ourselves and for others. These foundational concepts remain in hermeneutic phenomenology where reflection on lived experience continues the search for what it means to be human beings (van Manen, 1997).

Building on Heidegger's advances, Gadamer continued the reworking of hermeneutics as practical wisdom (phronesis) and understanding in a dialogic approach, releasing it from being merely a set of rules or an interpretive method. Gadamer (1975) regarded hermeneutics as "the art of understanding texts" whether sacred or secular, with an "acquired understanding" (p. 146) and applied this not only to literature but also to other genre. The nature of understanding is a central concern in hermeneutics, Gadamer (1975) noting that Schleiermacher regarded understanding as "agreement or harmony with another person" (p. 158) that occurs naturally in dialogue. Thus, understanding, as a specific task requiring effort is necessary only where the natural process is impeded, to bring to light "the truth that lies hidden in the text" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 163). To understand a text one is forced to reflect and argue internally, in the process becoming aware of the individuality and uniqueness of the other person. Entering into understanding, particularly across cultural divides, compels one to consider the other person. In this way "understanding is always an interpretation" and hermeneutics "a conversation with the text" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 331); a dialectic bringing into the present that which is being examined through asking questions so as to come to a common understanding with the text rather than a reconstruction of the text. As McManes Holroyd (2008) summarizes, "Interpretive hermeneutic understanding is born from the recognition that all human experiences are both rich and complex" (p. 2).

To interpret a text is to apply one's own thoughts to convey the meaning of the text into the present and to incorporate it into one's thoughts to the point that it becomes one's own. Consequently there can be no single correct interpretation of a text; rather the text and the interpreter are regarded as two partners in the hermeneutical conversation (Gadamer, 1975, p. 349). There is also an acknowledgement that "one can never hope to discover everything" (McManus Holroyd, 2008, p. 1) and that we will never fully understand some experiences. The interpreter can never understand the experiences of others completely as there is a distance between the interpreter and the text, and each person's experiences are unique. We can however, approach the experiences of others with an attitude of openness and a willingness to reconsider the knowledge we currently grasp.

Hermeneutics recognizes that the interpreter brings his or her own concepts, own biases, and own experiences to the text, “there is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, however much the will of our knowledge must be directed towards escaping their thrall” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 446). Hatch (2002) and MacManes Holroyd (2008) note that both phenomenological and hermeneutic researchers begin their inquiries with a consideration of their own understanding and experiences with the phenomenon they are exploring which “are from our history, culture, language and experiences and constitute our life world” (MacManes Holroyd, 2008, p. 4).

### **5.3.2 The development of Phenomenology.**

In the literature it is noted that it is not possible to assign a single meaning to phenomenology as Van der Mescht (2004) comments, “Phenomenology has come to mean different things to different people” (p. 2) and Schweitzer (2002) concurs, “The debate as to the nature of phenomenology will continue as well as the search for appropriate methodologies” (p. 4).

The beginnings of phenomenology are generally traced to Husserl’s *Logische Untersuchungen* (Logical Investigations) of 1900-1901 which drew together concepts of logic and descriptive psychology of the time (Cerbone, 2006; Embree, 1997; Moran, 2005; Smith, 2009). Other figures of significance in the development of phenomenology were the philosophers Husserl (1859-1938), Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), Sartre (1905-1980), and Heidegger, as mentioned previously. From its origins with the writings of Husserl, two main forms of phenomenological research have developed: one in which the researcher contemplates the phenomenon directly and engages in pure description, currently being described by some as *Husserlian* phenomenology; the other, described by some as “empirical” phenomenology, where the experience of others is considered (Schweitzer, 2002; Van der Mescht, 2004). From these two varieties have branched seven tendencies, of which hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology is regarded as one, the others being genetic phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology, historicist phenomenology, constitutive phenomenology, realistic phenomenology and existential phenomenology (Embree, 1997; Smith, 2009).

Phenomenology is concerned with studying phenomena in our experience, and the significance of those phenomena, from a subjective perspective. The phenomena studied are those with which we are familiar and conscious of, such as “the significance of objects, events, tools, the flow of time, the self, and others as these things arise and are experienced in our „life-world””(Smith, 2009). Writing of the phenomenology of Husserl, Cerbone (2006), comments that when contemplating a physical object Husserl considered that there is always more to discover, that there is an “endless series of possible presentations” (p. 19). In observing experience however, Husserl considered it possible to “grasp it in its entirety...the phenomenon can be completely present as the object of that experience” (Cerbone, 2006, p. 20). Schweitzer (2002) notes that Husserl posited that it was possible to “uncover the indubitable truth” (p. 1) of the phenomenon through constantly referring or returning to the phenomenon itself.

The search is undertaken to understand the meaning of human experience embodied, contextualised and situated “as a total experience involving mind and body, affective and cognitive faculties and feeling and understanding with an emphasis on the reciprocity of various elements” (Tam, 2008, p. 2), van Manen (1997) using the term *geistig* meaning “a matter of the depth of the soul, spirit, embodied knowing and being.” (p. 14). Understanding of the meaning of experience is gained or made intelligible through language; phenomenology asks the questions such as: what is it like? What is the nature of the phenomenon?

Since van Manen’s 1997 model of lived experience and pedagogy, the consideration of “lived experience” as a phenomenological approach to research has gained importance. However, to the English speaker the term lived experience seems puzzling, leaving one asking the question, what other kinds of experience are there? The etymology of the term lies in philosophical German where the word *erfahrung* (experience) and *erleben* (to live to see) were combined to form the neologism *Erlebnis*, a noun used to describe immediate individual experiences before reflection (Burch, 2006). The term was absorbed into academic convention to describe what personally and immediately one experiences for oneself (Gadamer, 1975). For van Manen, lived experience is our everyday existence or, using a term employed by Husserl, our “lifeworld”, revealed through the experiences and recollections of

individuals prior to any interpretation, conceptualization or abstract (theoretical) reflection. The challenges in relating what is and what is not lived experience are noted by Barnacle (2001).

What can we gain or discover from an investigation of lived experience? In researching lived experience there is no attempt to develop theory but to offer insights: “Phenomenological research ...attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world pre-reflectively, without taxonomizing, classifying, or abstracting it” (van Manen, 1997, p. 9). It is these texts of everyday, common experiences that phenomenology describes, explores and interprets to gain reflective understanding while avoiding arbitrariness or self-indulgence (van Manen). Through reflection on the lived experiences of others we deepen our own experience and understanding of what the nature of the phenomenon, in this study learning and speaking English as a second or other language, is “as an essentially human experience” (van Manen, p. 62).

### **5.3.3 Hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.**

The hermeneutic phenomenological methodology followed in this study is that conceptualised by van Manen, who partnered hermeneutic and phenomenological forms of enquiry which, as has been considered earlier, although diverse separately, also share some fundamental principles. Phenomenology focuses on lived human experiences, gaining access to individual’s experiences by asking participants to describe them, hermeneutics aims to interpret and understand texts; common human experiences, written or otherwise. As van Manen comments:

Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a descriptive (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an interpretive (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena (1997, p. 180).

Van Manen (1997, p. 31) describes six research activities that provide a basic structure to the hermeneutic phenomenological approach: the choice of a phenomenon to pursue; the exploration of that phenomenon through lived experiences; reflection on themes that distinguish the phenomenon; description of the

phenomenon through writing and rewriting; sustained pedagogical orientation to the phenomenon; and a balanced consideration of parts and the whole of the research. The returning from parts to the whole of the phenomenon is also referred to as the “hermeneutic spiral or circle” (Paterson & Higgs, 2005, pp. 343-345), and is regarded as a constant process.

To van Manen (1997), hermeneutic phenomenology avoids dictating a “predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques and concepts that would rule-govern the research project” (p. 29) and as such there is no single method that is followed but rather, the researcher decides or develops the research methods, the techniques and procedures required to investigate the phenomenon of interest. The hermeneutic phenomenological researcher has a wide range of data collection methods available with which to collect experiential description from others. Hatch (2002) includes the following:

Protocol writing (asking others to write their experiences down); interviewing (gathering experiential narrative material through conversation); observing (collecting anecdotes of experiences through close observation); studying experiential descriptions in literature and art (examining poetry, novels, stories, plays, biographies, works of art, and the phenomenological literature for insight into the nature of the phenomena under investigation); and examining diaries, journals, and logs (searching for meaning in writing individuals have done for themselves). (pp. 29-30)

#### **5.3.4 Hermeneutic phenomenology in this study.**

In situating this study within the hermeneutic phenomenology perspective, the overarching approach to this study reflects hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological concerns. The phenomenon under consideration is the lived experience of adult learners and users of English as a second language within the organizational context of the WCHO. Understanding of this phenomenon was sought through the research processes; participant responses in data generation were considered in terms of the person as a whole, including affective and cognitive faculties and these were enlightened by a review of the relevant literature. In combination, these provided texts enabling interpretation of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants in this study. It is acknowledged however that

experience is not a neutral phenomenon but is “culturally framed and shaped” (Brookfield, 1995, para.10), and that, as Brookfield warns that “uncritically affirming people's histories, stories and experiences risks idealizing and romanticising them. Experiences are neither innocent nor free from the cultural contradictions that inform them” (Brookfield, 1995, para.10) and any recollections or descriptions of lived experiences are already altered “already transformations of those experiences” (van Manen, 1997, p. 54).

Lived experience has a temporal structure in that “it can never be grasped in its immediate manifestation but only reflectively as past presence” (van Manen, 1997, p. 36). As such, the data collection methods adopted in this study, namely protocol writing and face to face interview, provide the opportunity for respondents to reflect on their ELL experiences guided by questions developed to provide some consistency across responses that would enable analysis and interpretation. Participants were invited to take part in either interview or protocol writing, where they were able to share their experiences in either a written format (protocol writing) or descriptive narrative (interviews) without attempting to explicate or analyse, categorise or conceptualise them (van Manen, 1997). The manner of data collection was decided as a matter of pragmatics considering the distance between researcher and respondents, but also data collection methods considered the most effective means of enabling respondents to participate to the fullest extent. Both grounded theory and thematic analysis methods were applied to analyse and interpret the data as the researcher required a framework with which to approach the mass of data collected.

The basic structure of the study reflects the six research activities that hermeneutic phenomenological approach outlined above, explained as follows:

- The choice of phenomenon pursued was the lived experience of adult learners of English as a second (or other) language.
- The exploration of that phenomenon through lived experiences was accomplished through asking respondents to describe their experiences of learning and using English as a second language and with reference to relevant literature.



- Reflection on themes that distinguish the phenomenon was incorporated in the analysis and interpretation of data but also in reference to relevant literature.
- Description of the phenomenon through writing and rewriting was the process undertaken to compile this study.
- “A strong and orientated pedagogical relation” (van Manen, 1997, p. 33) to the phenomenon was maintained through the researcher’s involvement in each step of the research process: selecting the sample and research methods, conducting the interviews; transcription of the interviews; analytical processes combining the interview and protocol writing texts; undertaking thematic analysis and grounded theory; in drawing together the data for analysis and in considering the significance for ELT pedagogy to fulfil the third research objective.
- Through the constant return to the data while undertaking analysis and interpretation, and through the consideration of parts and the whole of the research, balance was maintained.

#### **5. 4 A Definition of *Text***

Before continuing, it is essential to consider current uses of the term *text* already referred to in the preceding sections and central to the discussion with the use of text in this study also outlined. Language expresses or articulates lived experience. People recall experiences and reflect on them through language which is textual in nature, hence the use of the metaphor of text for human interactions, van Manen (1997) stating, “Experience and (un) consciousness are structured like a language, and therefore one could speak of all experience, all human interactions are some kind of text” (p. 39). Before embarking on this study the researcher was concerned with delineating text: What constitutes text and what does not, and is it possible for an exchange not to meet the criteria for a text? In attempting to delimit text the literature seems to start from the assumption that the concept of text is a given. Approaches to text are located within different disciplines, such as discourse analysis or linguistics, but it would seem that the presence or existence of text indicates that there must be a notion of what is not text, “that which is defined as outside or other to text at any given point” (Lee, 2005, p. 350).

According to Gadamer (1975), texts are “permanently fixed expressions of life” (p. 349) which are understood and expressed through the interpreter. To Shin (1996), “text is normally in written form” (p. 3) whereas to Halliday (1978) text “has no connotations of size; it may refer to speech act, speech event, topic unit, exchange, episode, narrative and so on” (p. 60). Although van Manen (1997) concurs that the use of *text* is appropriate, he warns against the danger of forgetting that it is a metaphor for human actions and experiences. Text in hermeneutics is generally regarded as a conversation between two partners, the text expressed through the interpreter (Gadamer, 1975, p. 349). Shin (1996) suggests that the starting point for hermeneutics is the distance between the reader and the text, the distance between the spoken and written. Van Manen (1997) describes the doing of phenomenological research as “always a bringing to speech of something” which is “most commonly a writing activity” (p. 32).

For the purposes of this study the researcher has found it helpful to draw on Halliday’s 1978 description of text as what “people do and mean and say in real situations” (p. 40) regarded as “actualised potential” (p. 58) of what could be said. Text then becomes interaction in which people are engaged in a context where linguistic choice is exercised and where there is a unity of relationship between interlocutors, or speaker and audience. Language provides the form in which text is communicated, whether written or spoken and “in one sense the notion of textuality becomes a fruitful metaphoric device for analyzing meaning” (van Manen, 1997, p. 39).

How then is the researcher to approach the texts gathered for purposes of comment, analysis and interpretation? How can we understand, analyse and interpret a text that is not our own? Lee (2005) suggests two extreme approaches to the text; mastery and liberty. The mastery approach regards the text as full of meaning and mystery yet the analyst or commentator has the necessary skills to release the deep meanings or “unlock that mystery” (Lee, 2005, p. 355). The libertarian approach regards the text as master and the interpreter the channel through which it transpires, approaching the text humbly with the aim of letting it teach the commentator. Lee (2005) comments that the selection of a text has a pragmatic purpose in that it provides material for interpretation, also noting that any interpretation needs to be

“subjected to readings” (p. 359). The importance of returning to the text is paramount in hermeneutic phenomenology as described by the hermeneutic spiral mentioned previously; a coming back to the phenomenon as a whole after considering the parts so as to maintain an orientation to the phenomenon being explored.

#### **5.4.1 Text in this study.**

For the purposes of this study, texts were regarded pragmatically as both a “product” and a “process” (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 10-11) in that a text can stand alone as an object or a unit that can be recorded, preserved and examined in relation to the exchange of meaning that it represents and is part of, acknowledging that the text reflects just a glimpse of a larger social context or reality. The texts generated for this research were either generated verbally or in written format in response to a set of guiding questions, in addition to the texts gathered and referred to in the review of the literature which provided both background to the study and the context in which the study was situated. Texts from these three sources were then drawn together to form the basis of the text that forms this study, while being mindful of van Manen’s (1997) reminder that “human actions and experiences are precisely that: action and experiences. To reduce the world to text and to treat all experience textually is to be forgetful of the metaphoric origin of one’s methodology” (p. 39).

### **5.5 Research Methods in this Study**

As has been detailed above, this study adopts a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to research which is situated in a constructivist epistemology and this is reflected in the choice of research methods utilized, including methods of data collection and analysis. In the section that follows, details of the rationale for selecting the sample utilized in this study will be detailed, followed by an overview of the data collection methods employed, the details of which will be presented in chapter six.

#### **5.5.1 Rationale for sample selection.**

When considering the method of sample selection for any study, maintaining research credibility is of importance. As has been stated previously, neither generalisation of the results to another context was envisaged nor are there any

claims that the results are representative of the population. Volunteer sampling methods were adopted as the most efficient and effective means of obtaining responses and the most appropriate when considering the organizational context. It is acknowledged that when utilising volunteer sampling within the population “the characteristics of those who volunteer are likely to be quite distinct from those who don’t” (O’Leary, 2004, p. 110) and as such the sample may not be representative. However, this study presents the experiences of the participants, their perceptions and opinions as given in responses to the guiding questions (protocol writing) and interview questions at a moment in time and in the context in which they were created. Responses were considered of equal importance, just as the experiences of each person were considered valid at the time in which they were captured.

The population from which the sample for this study was drawn consisted of all those working with, or training to work with, an international organization, the WCHO, who are non-native speakers of English. From this population, two sample groups were selected for their experience of the phenomena which is learning and using English as a second language, represented diagrammatically in Figure 4, p. 94. Those invited to participate at level one were working with the WCHO at the time of data collection. A total of 250 people were invited by a third party known to all to participate at level one, with 16 responses received. These 250 people were invited to participate as they represented different COS, were from a variety of countries of origin and L1, and had been working with the WCHO for different lengths of service. Respondents were at the time fulfilling a variety of roles within the organization, all functioning as members of multicultural teams and some with additional roles of responsibility. Participants in the study who held leadership positions were responsible for the welfare of personnel in the country in which they work, for implementing the overall strategy adopted by the team and for co-ordination with other teams at a regional and international level. As members of multicultural teams, all members have input into the everyday workings of their teams, contributing in areas of strategy and planning; as members of the WCHO it is possible that all these activities will take place through the medium of English.

Those invited to participate at level two were studying English in Australia, an inner circle country, at a WCHO training centre with the aim of fulfilling organizational

language requirements for NNSE before progressing to orientation with the organization. Twenty five people were invited by a third party to participate in an interview, all of whom were at the time enrolled in an ESL course. The invitation to participate was extended to all enrolled in two intakes of the course. They were recruited for their experience of the phenomenon, learning and using English as a second language and represented a variety of countries of origin and first languages. These participants were planning to progress through organizational orientation processes to participate in multicultural teams in different locations around the world.

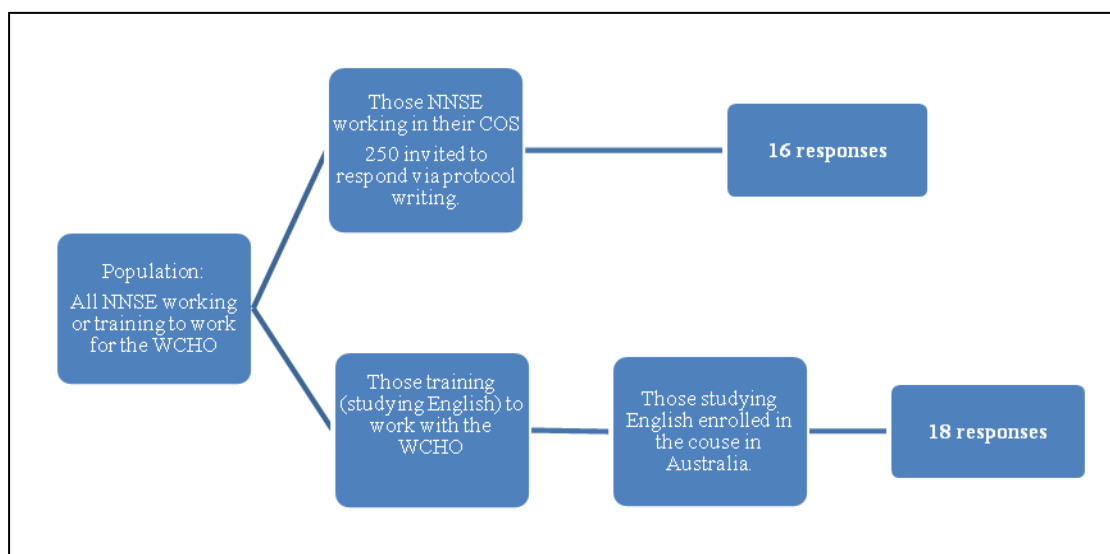


Figure 4. Sample selection.

Qualitative data gathering methods gave all respondents the opportunity to voice their own opinions, perceptions and experiences, steered by the guiding questions and the interview schedule. There was an overall structure to the interview, with probe questions encouraging the interviewee to respond in an individual way. The semi-structured interviews provided the participants with the opportunity to express their perspectives, yielding non-numerical qualitative data, allowing for the inclusion of unanticipated answers or uncommon opinions. These are appropriate for this study enabling the opinions and insights of the interviewees to be gathered for investigation.

The qualitative data gathering methods adopted resulted in a collection of respondents' perceptions, descriptions and observations. In scrutinising the responses recorded verbatim, the researcher determined patterns and themes. These were grouped or coded into a matrix of categories corresponding to themes that emerged from the raw data according to the content of the responses. This aggregation by category assisted in the discovery of associations, patterns and connections linking data, from which interpretations were drawn (Burns, 1994).

## **5.6 Data Collection Methods**

As mentioned previously, data were collected for this study at two levels concurrently. At level one, respondents were invited to undertake one off protocol writing in the form of recounting their own experiences generally, guided by a list of guiding open-ended questions provided. At level two, respondents participated in a semi-structured interview conducted by the researcher. The researcher was based in Launceston, Tasmania throughout the study, while participants at level one communicated from different parts of the world. Those participants interviewed for level two were participating in an ESL training programme in Launceston at the time the study was conducted. Both data collection methods have issues that require consideration before the methods are adopted and these will be explained in detail in the following sections. However, the data collection methods utilised for this study were selected as the most effective and efficient means of capturing the type of data sought for this study within the time frame available.

### **5.6.1 Data collection via email.**

With increasing familiarity in using computer mediated communication (CMC) tools such as electronic mail (e-mail) or chat, conducting interview using CMC broaden the options available to the researcher seeking to generate qualitative data. For this study, email was selected as a data collection method for respondents participating at level one, protocol writing. Email as a form of communication has become ubiquitous and surveys using email are generally considered to be an economical way of gathering data from a possibly unlimited number of respondents at once, with a global reach. Yun and Trumbo (2000) present six advantages of using email methods of data collection when compared with traditional postal systems:

- email is cheaper;

- email is faster;
- drawn out postal procedures are avoided;
- it is less liable to be ignored;
- it is considered more environmentally responsible; and
- it encourages responses.

However, these advantages seem to assume an efficient and widespread availability of access which may not be the case for all countries. Within the WCHO, email is an essential means of communication: “E-mail has become a normal part of life for most of us” (WEC International, 2004, p. 133) and the organization has its own security guidelines governing the use of electronic mail internationally.

Utilising electronic mail as a data collection method to generate qualitative data enabled the study to access and incorporate the experiences of participants contributing from different locations around the world which would not have been possible in any other way. In keeping with the organizational guidelines, files sent were as small as possible and messages sent only when necessary, with some potential recipients currently living and working in remote areas of the world where accessing emails can be complicated, time consuming and very expensive. As email is asynchronous, communication not restricted by location or time, it was anticipated that respondents could choose a time and location that suited them in which to respond, which could increase the response rate. Participants were informed that they could select the questions to which they preferred to respond.

An introductory email with three portable document format (PDF) attachments was sent by the third party using an email address that was recognisable to members of the organization, to avoid automatic deletion. PDF files were particularly practical when sending forms as the format allows documents to be viewed and printed on a wide range of operating systems (cross-platform) in their original design and formatting. Reading PDF files initially involves downloading a free program that is safe to use and widely accessible via the Internet (C.C.I.T., 2003).

The attachments sent consisted of an information sheet (Appendix A), a consent form (Appendix B), and guiding questions (Appendices C and D). Although some, such

as De Vita and Smallbone (n.d), consider that consent has been indicated by the return of the completed questionnaire, a consent form was attached for printing, signing, and returning to the researcher while the information sheet and guiding questions could be printed and retained for the participants' own records.

Respondents were given the option of returning their responses by post or by replying to the researcher's email address, which, in many countries, can be at the cost of a local call when using a dial-up connection, or at no additional cost when using a broadband connection. All participants but one elected to return their responses via email attachment with the remaining response returned via regular mail.

Privacy is an issue of concern for those taking part in any email survey, as the respondent's email addresses would register on the researcher's inbox once the response was received. As a result, anonymity could not be assured and this may have deterred some potential participants from returning their responses (List, 2003). However, confidentiality of the returned response could be assured by those involved in collecting the data guaranteeing that information would not be divulged. It was considered that giving the option of returning the response via the postal system may have been a more acceptable way of guaranteeing confidentiality and increasing response rates (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliot, 2002). However, as stated above, respondents demonstrated a preference for returning responses to the guiding questions via email attachment.

It is assumed that people within the sample selected had the computer skills necessary to open the email, open the PDF attachment, and then print the consent form for return via post, although it is also possible that this process may have been an unknown procedure for some individuals, resulting in their non-response. Boyer, Olsen and Jackson (2001) note that, "Even people who are fairly computer savvy are not always willing to spend time learning or trying to figure out a new application" (p. 4). Another issue for consideration in sending out the information as email attachments with a covering message was that due to an awareness of the threat of viruses spread through opening attachments some individuals routinely delete attachments from unknown sources without opening them. List (2003) notes that email questionnaires are best used when it is known that the target population are



regular email users, which would be appropriate within this organization as frequent email communication is common. The potential for this problem occurring was reduced in this study by using a third party for recruitment of participants with an email address that was widely recognised within the organization as a trustworthy source. Using this method of data collection also reduced the risk of inadvertent multiple submissions, or responses from those not intended to take part in the study.

Burns (1994) notes that, “Obtaining a high return on mailed questionnaires can be challenging” (p. 358) and provides some suggestions for increasing the rate of return. Although this study did not employ a questionnaire but rather required a written response to guiding questions and adopted two of the four suggestions adapted for the context, the response rate was lower than had been anticipated. The difficulty encountered with the email format of data collection in this study was the relatively low response rate when compared with that of the interview: from the 250 emails sent 16 responses were received, a response rate of 6.4%. The asynchronous nature of email communication can work as a disadvantage when compared to a face to face interview, as responses can be delayed and then forgotten. Many people within the organization have to cope with a large volume of email so that one that takes time and thought to answer can be relegated as unimportant. Yun and Trumbo (2000) comment that although electronic survey formats can increase rates of response “the overall response rates for e-mail surveys are known to be somewhat lower than paper and pencil surveys” (para. 13), and that some studies report low response rates. Yun and Trumbo (2000) suggest the following possibilities for the lower response rate:

- e-mails are easily discarded;
- emails can easily be overlooked as they do not have a physical presence; and
- e-mail is not anonymous. (para.15)

It is suggested that follow-up emails may increase response rates, however this was not possible during this study as the contact with potential participants was made possible through the goodwill of the third party. However, the responses received in this study, generated texts totalling 17,692 words, with most providing complete rich responses. Yun and Trumbo observe also that respondents “write lengthier and more self-disclosing comments on e-mail open-ended questionnaires than they do on mail survey questionnaires” (para. 23).

Once the emailed responses had been received they were saved in a workable format then converted to plain text documents and de-identified by assigning codes in the order in which they were received, resulting in documents labelled PW 1-16. The plain text documents were imported into WEFT QDA (Fenton, 2006) to be analysed in conjunction with the interview data.

### **5.6.2 Data collection via interview.**

The interview as a data collection method is of major importance in qualitative research generally, holding a number of advantages over other methods such as questionnaires. Although interviews have traditionally been in a face to face format with oral data recorded or via the telephone, with developments in technology other opportunities have arisen such as the use of Internet telephony, a text format interview involving use of the Internet in formats such as e-mail or realtime electronic communication (chat) (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). However, a face to face interview was considered the most appropriate method of data collection for respondents at level two and this was conducted with each respondent during two different time periods, the first during October/November 2006 and the second during October/November 2008.

As with any method, collecting data using interviews has advantages and disadvantages, which the researcher takes into consideration before utilising this method, but does provide access to the perceptions of others, Punch (1998) stating that the interview is “one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others” (p. 144). Burns (1994) considers the interview as a data gathering or generating method suitable for studies utilising a small sample size so as to obtain extensive data. Conducting interviews allows the researcher to dictate the nature of the interaction, whether flexible and informal with questions asked in a conversational manner or more formal and structured. Interviews can facilitate a comprehensive investigation of the topic through the planned use of a combination of open-ended and probe questions, with the interviewer able to provide explanation or clarification as necessary, thus facilitating extensive data generation (Brown & Rodgers, 2002; Burns, 1994).

It is acknowledged that interviews are interactional events providing “insight into individuals’ constructed social worlds and into the ways in which they convey those constructions in the particular interactional setting of the interview” (Freebody, 2003, p. 136). Freebody (2003) regards the interview as a data generating method rather than data gathering as the interviewer and participant “together make sense in generating meaningful accounts of the experiences they describe” (p. 137) shaped by the questions posed. Hatch (2002) also notes that what occurs in the interview context is a specialised type of speech event in which both interviewer and participant recognise their roles in generating data, in taking turns to ask and respond to questions.

The interview in hermeneutic phenomenology has very specific functions, as outlined by van Manen (1997) as follows:

- 1) It may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon.
- 2) It may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience. (p. 66)

A disadvantage in utilising interviews is that they can be time consuming, involving much organization and expense, noting that transcription of the audio data is also required once the interviews have been conducted so as to transform the data into a text format. Another disadvantage of using interviews noted is the possibility of interviewer effect which occurs when responses are adjusted by the respondent to suit what are perceived to be the expectations of the interviewer or to produce what are perceived as generally more socially acceptable answers.

Collecting data through interview for this study was regarded as time well invested as the data generated were extensive and thick. The researcher also had a thorough knowledge and understanding of the data from the time of collection which proved useful during data analysis, which Hatch (2002) regards as a requirement for analysis using themes: “searching for these requires an intimate knowledge of the raw data... This means once again immersing oneself in a careful reading of the original data set” (p. 173). In endeavouring to avoid or reduce interviewer effect in this study, the

interviews were conducted in a standardised manner in the same location following the same format with each respondent and the interview schedule followed, although the interviewer passed over items that had already been covered by the participant in previous responses to avoid repetition of the same material. As the researcher conducted all interviews, a standardised interviewing technique could also be maintained (Burns, 1994). Although some interviewer effect was possible from the interviewer also being researcher and teacher, this was minimised as the interview questions were focused on the respondents overall ELL experience rather than any evaluation of the course in which they were enrolled at the time. The participants had also completed all assessment requirements related to the course and as such there could be no perceived influence on overall assessment for the course through participation in the interview.

#### ***5.6.2.1 Interviews in this study***

In order to comprehend the experiences of those who were at the time studying ESL it was clear that the generating qualitative data through conducting interviews would best suit this study and participants at level two. In deciding on the interview format for data generation the researcher sought to generate thick description, to capture and convey “the full picture of behaviour being studied – holistically, comprehensively and in context” (Punch, 2009, p. 360). Both functions of the interview in hermeneutic phenomenology described above were sought for this study; the exploration through the interview of the meaning of the respondents’ experience to them personally and the development of understanding of these experiences for concerned others.

A face to face semi-structured interview format, with standardised open ended questions, was selected for generating data with respondents at level two in this study for a number of reasons. The interview as a data collection method was considered most appropriate for the sample selected as it was recognised that the participants, NNSE who were studying English as a second language in an inner circle country, would find it easier to respond in spoken English rather than writing extensive responses to a questionnaire. Using the interview format, participants were able to explain or clarify their responses as necessary, and for the second language learner it is helpful to have the option of employing compensatory strategies such as

rewording. In this way also, the interviewer was able to explain or clarify any aspects of the questions that were not clear to participants, which would not have been possible had a written format, such as a questionnaire, been employed. Using a semi-structured interview also ensured that there was limited digression as the interviewer was able to keep the respondents focused on the question or topic at hand. Prior to conducting the interview, participants were informed that it was their prerogative not to answer questions when asked and that they could stop the interview at any stage. Interestingly, all participants responded to all questions asked and all chose to complete their interviews.

An interview schedule employing open ended questions was developed to give an overall direction to the interview, with a series of probe questions for each of the main questions also developed for use as necessary in eliciting more comprehensive responses. The interview schedule (Appendix D) was followed by the interviewer with probe questions utilised as necessary to further explore the topic under consideration and to ensure that data collected would be comparable in a systematic data analysis process, the researcher noting the advice given by Glicken (2003), “If you use different questions with each respondent, it will be impossible for you to make any sense out of the data” (p. 94). The interview schedule was pretested with a person of a similar English language level to those invited to participate in the interview so as to locate any problematic vocabulary, to ensure that the questions produced the type of responses sought, and to ensure that they were sensitively worded in a manner appropriate across cultures. Adopting a semi-structured format did enable the respondents to be interviewed systematically and comprehensively “while allowing for different experiences to be articulated” (Pepper & Wildy, 2009, p. 19).

The interviews were conducted in a location that was familiar to the respondents and recorded via a microphone directly to the open source software *Audacity* version 1.3.4 (Audacity team, 2007-2008), an open source audio recording and editing program that saves the audio data as WAV files. The WAV files were then converted to mp3 files and transcribed verbatim using the voice-recognition software program, *Dragon Naturally Speaking* (Nuance, 2006) with manual adjustments as necessary. This proved to be more complex and time consuming than had been expected as the

responses were transcribed complete as spoken which the program found difficult to contend with without correcting or pre-empting the text. Moreover, paralinguistic features such as pauses or laughter were also recorded. The resulting documents were saved in a format that was straightforward to read and store before being converted to a plain text document for use with WEFT QDA (Fenton, 2006). Each interview transcription was assigned a code in the order transcribed to de-identify the resulting written texts, labelled I 1-I 18 used in this thesis. The process of transcription was completed by the end of 2008.

There were a number of advantages in the researcher conducting all the interviews personally. It was recognised that for some people speaking into a microphone can be daunting knowing that responses will be recorded and this is particularly so as respondents were utilising their second language. The researcher was able to create an environment for the interview that was conducive to a relaxed conversational approach; the location for the interviews was familiar to the respondents and the interviewer and respondents already had a working relationship, so rapport had already been established. The location was chosen also as it enabled the researcher to record the interviews directly into the computer program Audacity (Audacity team, 2007-2008) for subsequent formatting and transcription to text. Having conducted the interviews the researcher was able to observe responses and gained a firsthand knowledge of the data which proved valuable during the data analysis process, as specific examples or instances could be recalled and located in the data. The researcher also had an overview of the data in total and was able to begin to recognise common themes that were emerging from the data from the early stages of the analysis process. In addressing the mass of data generated, the systematic approach to data analysis employed ensured the quantity of data remained manageable.

### **5.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

To analyse the data generated in this study, the researcher turned to data analysis methods that provided a structured approach to the process. As mentioned previously (section 5.3.3), hermeneutic phenomenology methodology does not dictate any specific research method but rather lets the researcher decide the most appropriate methods according to unique nature and requirements of each project.

Two related methods of qualitative data analysis were combined for use with the data generated for this study: thematic analysis and grounded theory. To utilize these methods it was necessary to transform data generated by the two collection methods into a workable text document format that enabled computer assisted analysis and interpretation. The written texts generated at level one were saved directly from the email attachment and converted to plain text documents.

To collate responses a computer assisted qualitative data analysis package was utilised to facilitate thematic analysis through coding. *WEFT QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis)* (Fenton, 2006) program was chosen above others as it is an open source program available through a public domain licence, created to analyse textual data such as the interview transcriptions and written texts generated for this study. Although there are other programs available that are used widely, this program suited the purposes of this study as it can be used in multiple locations, use not being limited to a single computer or network. In a similar manner to other qualitative data analysis programs, WEFT QDA (Fenton, 2006) enables the researcher to assign categories to the data, to gather data under these categories or codes, to create further subcategories and to assign memos to the data. The search function also enables the gathering of data related to one word, employed in this study for in vivo coding. Importantly for this study also was the straightforward manner in which the software enabled the researcher to return regularly to a consideration of the complete original transcripts to maintain grounding in the data and a strong orientation to the phenomenon, thus reflecting the utilisation of the hermeneutic spiral mentioned previously.

Using the WEFT QDA program (Fenton, 2006) also enabled the researcher to analyse the data generated in this study through a combination of analysis methods; thematic analysis and grounded theory. These methods have commonalities that enable them to be used jointly while they also provided a structure that was flexible yet gave a form to the data analysis process that was appropriate for the constructivist approach taken in this study. Both forms of data collection were complementary in that respondents produced texts that were descriptive of their own personal experiences. The texts generated in protocol writing were concise whereas

the data generated through the interviews were thicker and more expansive. Figure 5 (p.105) presents the data generation process in diagrammatic form.

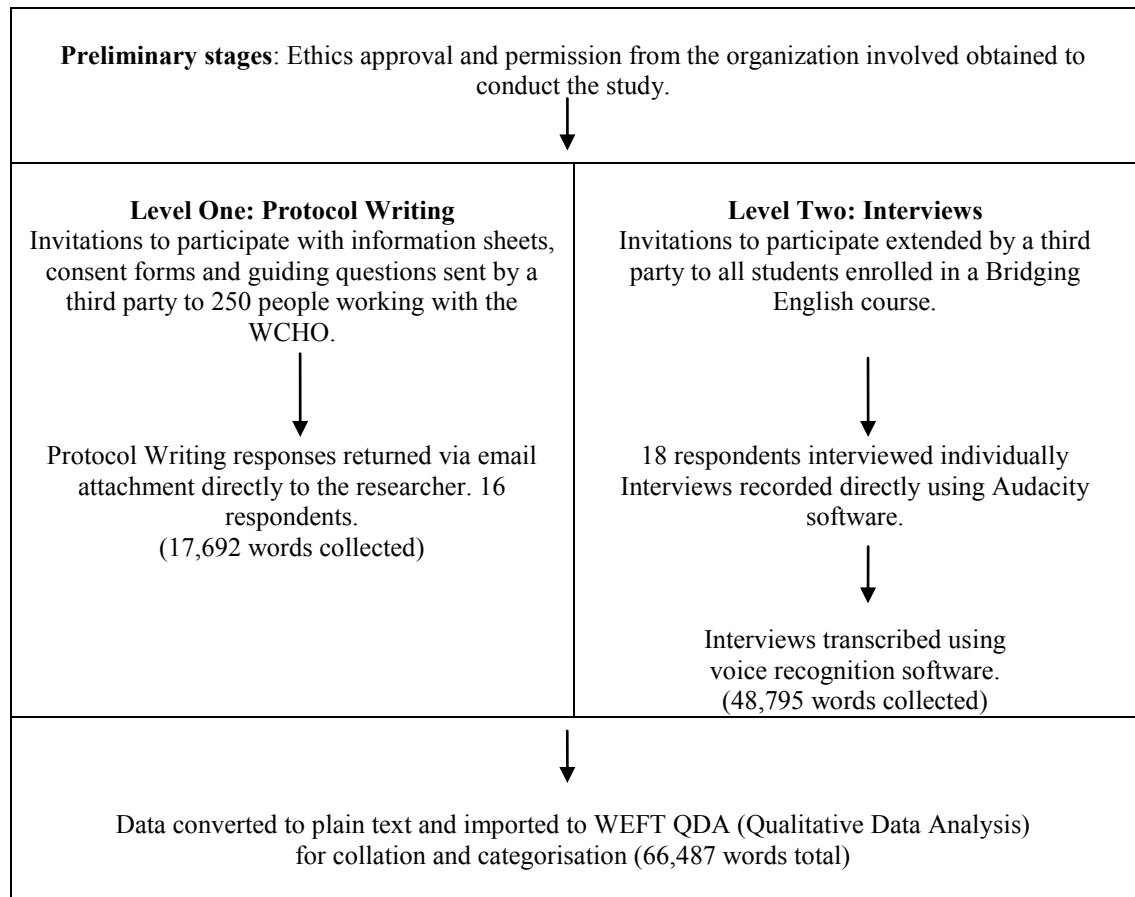


Figure 5. From data to texts: The data generation process summarised.

## 5.8 Conclusion

The process of data collection when read seems to be straightforward and obvious yet, in reality, it involves multiple small decisions and the development of skills to be able to undertake and achieve the results sought. There are a wide range of methods available to the researcher and at times the choices can become distracting. In this study the sample chosen and the philosophical foundations in hermeneutic phenomenology assisted in clarifying the type of data gathering methods that were appropriate.

Conducting interviews and reading the written responses sent proved to be a very enriching time for the researcher as participants were very generous in sharing their



time, experiences and their perceptions, the time spent together was on a different plane to that of the student/teacher relationship, echoing that described earlier by Freebody (2003) as cooperatively making sense of their experiences together. The depth of thought and level of reflection that they were able to communicate in English was, at times, astonishing and there were occasions when the researcher could barely conceal her excitement as participants shared the changes that they themselves had experienced as a result of the full experience of language learning in a new cultural context; changes in self that went far beyond the acquisition of language skills.

As a beginner researcher, the mass and the richness of the data generated were satisfying in their “raw” form, and a sense of responsibility to retain the integrity of the responses was felt. The challenge of data analysis and interpretation beckoned.

### **5.9 Summary**

The research methodology utilised in this study has been outlined and the basis for the selection of the data collection methods adopted in preparation for data analysis explicated in this chapter. In this fifth chapter the following have been described and discussed:

- the study’s basis in hermeneutic phenomenology;
- the consequences of this for the research methods chosen outlined;
- the manner in which text is regarded in this study; and
- an overview of the data analysis methods utilised in the study

in preparation for the chapter that follows.

Having detailed the methods employed to gather data chapter six presents, in a separate chapter, details of the data analysis and interpretation methods utilized in general and explains the manner in which they were employed in this study in detail.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Data Analysis**

In this sixth chapter, the processes undertaken and methods employed to analyse and interpret the data collected for this study. A general description of thematic analysis and grounded theory begins the chapter followed by a detailed description of the implementation of data analysis methods in this study.

According to Hatch (2002), “Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning” (p. 148) and it is this meaning that the researcher seeks to make clear to others. The terms interpretation and analysis are at times used interchangeably (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), with analysis also regarded as an interpretive process.

Interpretation in this study is the both the “pointing to” and “pointing out” of something (van Manen, 1997, p. 26) which was facilitated by the organisation of the data initially through the utilization of the two data analysis methods. Hatch (2002) observes that, “Interpretations are constructed by researchers” (p. 180) and it is through data analysis that the constructivist researcher aims to elicit the reality “submerged” within the data and ensure that it is comprehensible to the reader, with the focus being “how people experience the world and make sense of it rather than with any notion of underlying truth” (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 293). It is through the process of data analysis that the researcher discovers meaning, and it is these meanings that constitute the essence of the research process. It is then the quality of the data analysis conducted in a study that determines the quality of the research.

In order to make the mass of data collected in qualitative studies comprehensible, a framework for analysis is required for “generating interpretations and grounding them in data” (Hatch, 2002, p. 190). Elements of two frameworks were employed in this study, that of thematic analysis and grounded theory. Both are inductive methods, proceeding from an examination of specific details emerging from within the data, subsequently moving to detect patterns across the data and to develop general statements in explanation of discoveries made. The use of two frameworks provides alternative ways of viewing or considering the data to “facilitate the teasing out of relevant concepts from data” (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 49), Corbin and Holt

also noting that “if one adopts that theory is constructed or even co constructed out of data there is no reason why an analyst can’t use a variety of analytic tools ... to facilitate that construction” (p. 50).

Grounded theory enables these general explanations to be encapsulated in theory through a process of coding. Both the thematic analysis and grounded theory approaches to data analysis have commonalities and the integration of these frameworks provides different insights to the phenomenon complementary to hermeneutic phenomenological principles upon which this study is based. Hermeneutic phenomenology, with its constructivist basis, sits best within the framework of such interpretive analysis (Hatch, 2002).

### **6.1 Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory**

Thematic analysis is widely used analytic method in qualitative research, valued for its flexibility and the potential it presents to produce a “rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Thematic analysis searches for repeated patterns throughout a set of data. Boyatzis (1998) identifies thematic analysis as a process ideally suited for use with the mass quantities of data generated in qualitative studies and involving three stages: deciding on sampling and design; developing themes and a code; validating and using the code. This has been expanded by Braun and Clarke (2006) to six phases as followed in this study:

- familiarizing yourself with the data;
- generating initial codes;
- searching for themes;
- reviewing themes;
- defining and naming themes; and
- producing the report.

Boyatzis (1998) observes that a code that is useful in every stage of the analysis and interpretive processes “is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (p. 31). Attaching a code begins the organization of data by enabling identification of themes emerging in a process of interpretation and involves the recognition of important moments in the text under consideration. Encoding can be

theory driven, prior data or research driven, or data driven. Theory driven code development proceeds from the researcher's theory established prior to undertaking the study and for which support is sought from the data. Prior data or research driven coding employs the codes developed by other researchers while data driven codes remain close to the data without attempting to impose a pre-existing coding framework. For this study, data driven coding was utilised with the aim of reflecting the raw data as closely as possible (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Having identified and drawn together data that are related into patterns or themes, both further organization and analysis or interpretation of data are facilitated. Themes identified are those that are of importance to the phenomenon being studied and these can be identified at two different categories or levels of analysis: the explicit or semantic level identifies themes at a surface, visible or apparent level while latent themes identified are underlying "ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations - and ideologies" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84) of the data and are necessarily more interpretive.

It is acknowledged in thematic analysis that the search for and discovery of themes arising from the data cannot be finished completely (Boyatzis, 1998). Hatch (2002) concurs, commenting that no qualitative analysis can ever be complete as "there are always more data than can be adequately processed, more levels or understanding than can be explored, and more stories than can be told" (p. 149). This reflects the comment by van Manen (1997), as related previously in section 5.1, that the possibilities for further interpretation will never be exhausted.

It is notable that the necessity for researchers to be "open to all information" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 9), to become immersed in the data, and the constant reading and re-reading of the data employed in thematic analysis reflect a foundational principle of hermeneutic phenomenology (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Hatch, 2002). The hermeneutic spiral or circle, the constant return from the part to the whole, ensures that the themes developed remain connected strongly to the original data and provides a sense of the whole in context, regarded as essential in hermeneutic phenomenology, as noted earlier.

Just as thematic analysis ensures a strong connection to data collected, grounded theory is explicitly a strategy to develop or generate theory inductively from data (Punch, 2009). The data becomes reduced as connections between concepts emerging are integrated to construct theory (Punch, 1998), establishing relationships between concepts regarded as essential. To Strauss and Corbin (1998) theory is “a set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain phenomena” (p. 15). These relationships are established through coding in a systematic process. Grounded theory was originally formalised by Strauss and Corbin in 1967, providing researchers with a framework with which to approach qualitative data and to legitimize qualitative inquiry, however the approach has continued to develop from the original into four manifestations; those of dimensional analysis, situational analysis, constructivist grounded theory and Glaserian grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Morse et al., 2009). This study adopts a constructivist grounded theory approach to data analysis to take the study towards the development of theory through the identification of related concepts which describe the experiences of the participants in this study.

In the grounded theory approach, theory is seen as a set of propositions which show the connections between concepts at a higher level of abstraction than the data themselves. Coding is central to grounded theory, as it is to thematic analysis, enabling the researcher to build rather than test theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Using grounded theory procedures, four levels of coding may be undertaken: open coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. Open coding is the initial level of analysis, where the data are opened up, “broken down into discrete parts, closely examined and compared for similarities and differences” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). Data are used to generate broad or narrow categories that are “grounded abstract concepts” (Punch, 1998, p. 211), where categories identify significant phenomenon arising from the data. Identifying concepts that are relevant involves interaction with the data, asking questions of the data to establish what is happening or what is being expressed (Corbin & Holt, 2005).

Axial coding searches for subcategories to further define properties of the category so as to add coherence to the emerging analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin

(1998, p. 125) “a subcategory answers questions about the category such as when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences” while Charmaz (2006) comments that undertaking axial coding may “make grounded theory cumbersome” (p. 63). Corbin and Holt (2005) maintain however, that axial and open coding occur concurrently as “it is impossible for an analyst to pick out a concept from data without recognizing its possible connections to other bits of data and concepts” (p. 50). The final coding type utilised, theoretical coding, involves a process of integrating and refining the categories into theory; a bringing together of the pieces. Theoretical coding also moves analysis to a conceptual level. It is of importance to acknowledge that there are different ways concepts can be integrated, rather than a single correct statement of relationships existing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

This study adopted a constructivist approach to grounded theory as described in Morse et al., (2009) and Corbin and Holt (2005) where constructivist grounded theory makes a number of assumptions: that there are multiple realities and multiple perspectives on the realities; that data are constructed mutually through the interaction of researcher and participant; and that analysis arises from this interaction, and that therefore subjectivity is present and inheres the data analysis process. Data are regarded as situational as researcher and participant are situated in the context and analysis does not isolate the phenomenon from its location whether social or historical, but rather constructivist grounded theory “reshapes the interaction between researcher and participant” (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 31). In adopting a grounded theory approach to data analysis it is again acknowledged that, for the constructivist, the theory that results is an interpretation, dependent on the researcher’s approach and perspective (Charmaz, 2006).

Scholars acknowledge that grounded theory is not a prescribed method or formulaic techniques but rather a “way of thinking about data – processes of conceptualization-of theorizing from data” (Morse et al., 2009, p. 18). Charmaz (2006) presents the grounded theory process in a linear form with the qualification that, in reality, the process may not follow a linear pattern. In this study, grounded theory was used as a framework for approaching data, although the processes of grounded theory as developed originally or those suggested by Charmaz (2006) were not adhered to strictly. As pointed out in the current literature, grounded theory method involves

“systematic, yet flexible guidelines” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2), Morse et al. (2009) agreeing that techniques and procedures adopted are “to be used by the researcher as he or she sees fit to solve methodological problems... They are not a set of directives to be rigidly adhered to” (p. 40).

One aspect that continues to generate debate in the grounded theory discourse is the timing of the literature review in the analysis process, with Strauss and Corbin (1998) cautioning that if undertaken early in the process, there is a danger of becoming “so steeped in the literature” (p. 49) that it detracts from making discoveries. In this study the researcher conducted an initial review prior to undertaking data analysis to gain insight and to establish the “bearings” for the study, as aspects from a number of discourses inform the study returning regularly to the literature for clarification as necessary.

The issue of whether meaning emerges from the data or is constructed or co-constructed by researcher and participant is an area of difference between the traditional grounded theory, the emergent viewpoint, and the constructivist approach. Charmaz (2006) notes that at times scholars and researchers “talk about discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer” (p. 10). In the emergent viewpoint a single theory or truth or reality is “inherently embedded” in the data (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 49). According to the constructivist viewpoint a set of data can be interpreted in many ways, there are “multiple realities” (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 49), while grounded theory is constructed “through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10).

In this study, the term *emerge* has been adopted to describe the process through which concepts that of importance are located within the data and then coded, it would seem that the term best captures the strong links to the data that the process maintains and the sense of immersion in the data already co-constructed by researcher and participant. However, it is acknowledged that the researcher constructs codes, themes or theories to make sense of what is observed and that the final rendering is a construction of the reality as interpreted by the researcher; the researcher is active in the process. Analytic tools are used by the researcher to

“clarify thinking, provide alternate ways of thinking about data and facilitate the teasing out of relevant concepts from data” (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 50).

## **6.2 Data Collection and Analysis in this Study**

The data collected for this study were analysed and interpreted to fulfil the aims and objectives of the study which focus the study on discovering and documenting the lived experiences of adults who were learning and using English as a second language in order to work with an international organization. The research objectives of this study are:

- to examine the lived experiences of personnel within an international organization who use English as their second or additional language;
- to explore the routine experiences of adult learners and users of English as a second or additional language; and
- to explore the significance of the findings for ELT pedagogy.

To achieve the aims and objectives of the study data were collected concurrently from two main sources, semi-structured interviews and one off protocol writing. Prior to data collection proceeding, permission to conduct the study was sought from the organization and training facility involved, and once granted, invitations to participate were extended to the sample groups. 16 participants returned responses via email or the postal system in the form of Protocol Writing and the responses of 18 interview participants were recorded then transcribed and converted to written text using speech recognition software. The text documents were then converted to plain text for importing to WEFT QDA (Fenton, 2006) for collation and analysis. This process is represented diagrammatically in Figure 5 (p. 109).

Both thematic analysis and grounded theory were employed in the data analysis: thematic analysis enabled the pulling together of data into descriptive themes and grounded theory enabled the transformation of data into more abstract concepts that contributed to theory building. By relating these themes to the literature from the related discourses, a number of issues of significance to ELT were identified.

Although qualitative studies often involve some form of member check where participants are asked to check the transcription and interpretation of their responses



for accuracy, this was not practicable during this study as interview participants graduated and left the location shortly after their interviews and participants who contributed protocol writing were in diverse overseas locations. For this study, data were coded, themes identified and analysis undertaken by the researcher then discussed with the supervisor for the study. As the researcher also conducted the interviews, this provided a close connection and familiarity with the data which was advantageous when identifying themes. Although this allowed consistency of approach, input from other researchers could have been sought for alternative perspectives on the data. The challenges in using both thematic analysis and grounded theory are those that are common to any qualitative method; both methods demanding high input of time and energy (Boyatzis, 1998).

### **6.3 Thematic Analysis in this Study**

Thematic analysis across all data was undertaken first, beginning at the interview stage and in an entire Protocol Writing (PW) document overview. This was possible as, while recording and interacting with the interviewee in addition to reading the submitted written responses, the researcher became aware of major trends emerging from the texts and the major commonalities and contrasts that were evident even at the early stages of data collection. To deal with the mass of data, responses were initially collated under question responses, creating chunks of text with shared focus and facilitating the identification of areas of commonality or contrast. The process followed the six phases prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006) as presented above, with phases 3-5 conducted concurrently and with constant return to the data to ensure integrity of themes identified. Figure 6 (p. 115) provides a diagrammatic representation of the process and relationship to the six phases.

Encoding was undertaken principally in a whole sentence or paragraph approach initially, moving to line by line as categories were identified, however words or phrases that were of significance to the respondents were also collated concurrently using the search function in the program. In this manner codes were drawn inductively from the raw data working systematically throughout the data. Boyatzis (1998) claims that working in this way the proximity of the code to the raw data increases the interrater reliability and appreciation for the data while decreasing potentially contaminating factors by avoiding intermediaries.

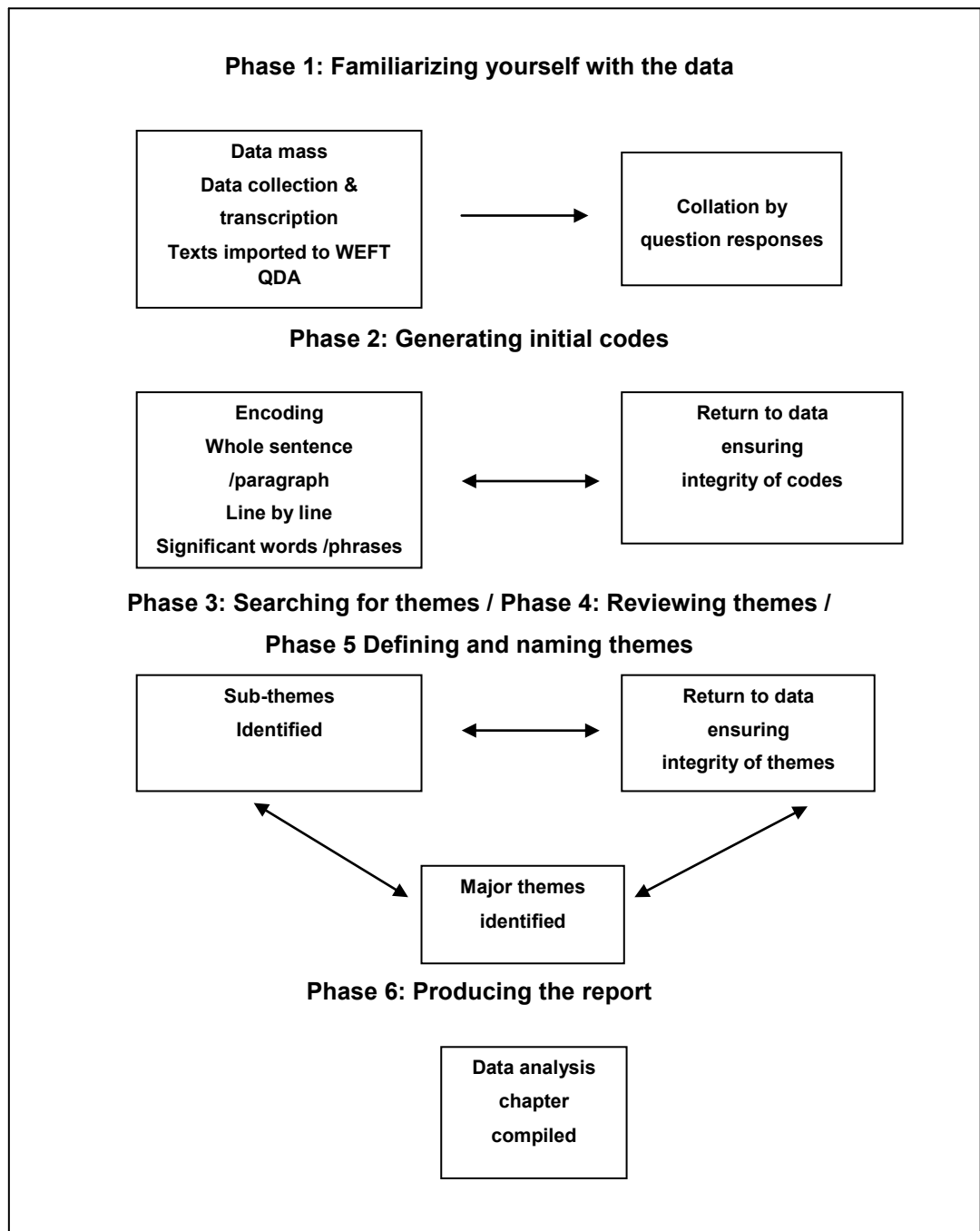


Figure 6. Thematic Analysis process undertaken in this study.

Once coding had been completed a number of subthemes were identified as commonalities between codes were detected and related codes were combined. Relationships between codes were observed, the significance of these perceived and

labelled as subthemes. Relationships between these subthemes were detected and these drawn into main themes. A constant return to the collated data and reviewing of the relationships between subthemes and themes ensured integrity of the themes. Themes were refined and defined through a process of identifying what was of importance in the coded data. A number of themes were detectable in the data and Table 1 (below) and Table 2 (p. 117) present the process of theme development from code through subthemes.

Code	Subtheme	Theme
Feeling childlike	Transformation involves changes in approach to and attitudes towards language learning.	Learning and utilising ESL engenders transformation
New study methods		
Reflect on old methods		
Implement my methods		
Increased confidence	Transformation involves changes to self including increasing self confidence and sense of empowerment	
Communication possible		
Personal changes		
Develop problem-solving skills		
Confidence in LL skills		
Identity changes		
Access to the world		
Learning culture	Transformation involves the development of intercultural awareness including increased understanding of the host culture	
Intercultural relationships possible/sought		
Essential nature of people		
Identification with other LL		

*Table 1.* Thematic Analysis Theme 1: Learning English engenders transformation.

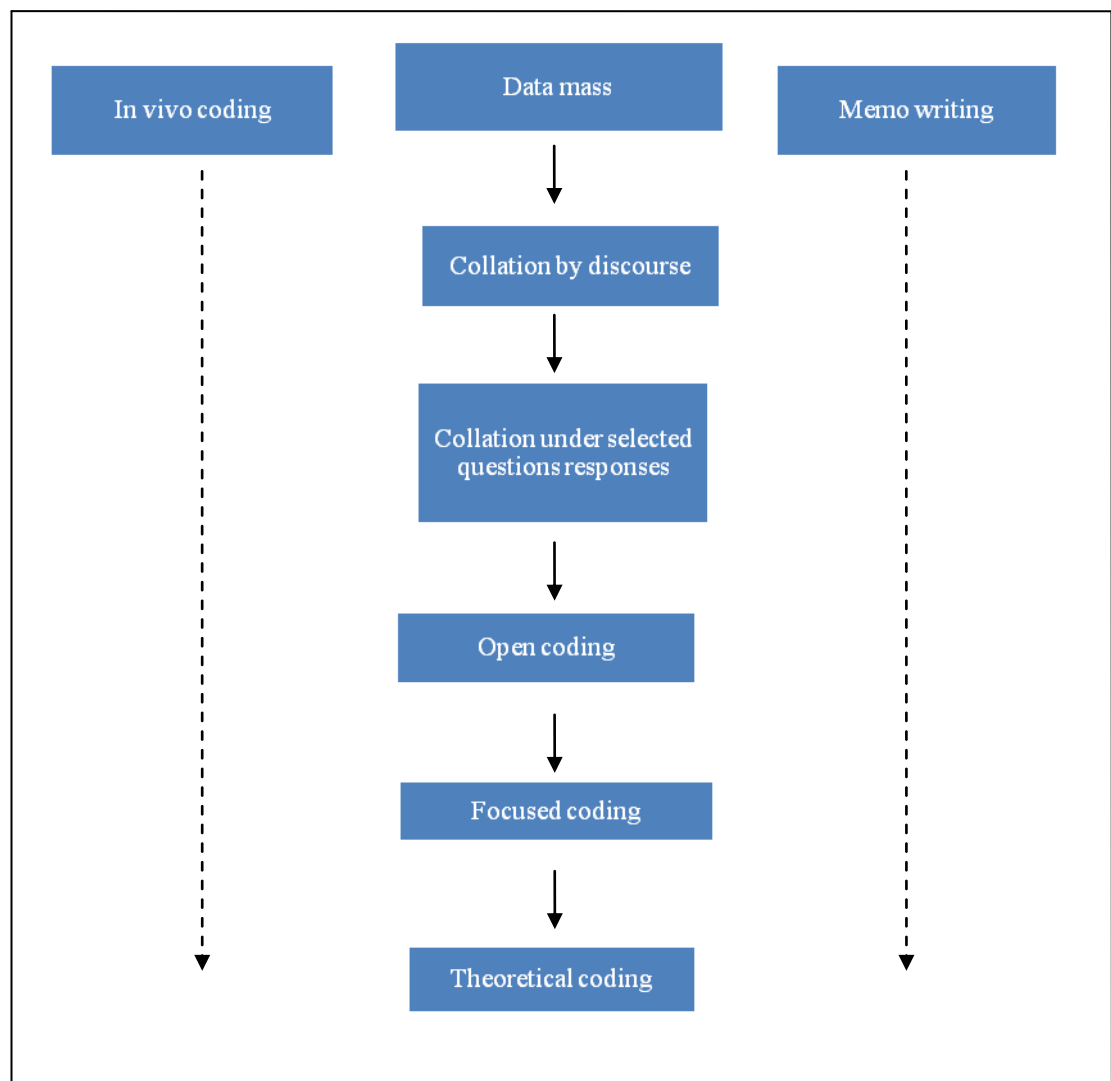
Code	Subtheme	Theme
Seeking assent of wider family	Obtaining endorsement from wider family important	Studying ESL necessitates negotiating changes in relationships
English enables access to ICT		
Learning English essential		
Family providing support		
Losing physical / direct face to face contact	Studying English overseas necessitates encountering and dealing with issues of separation	
Maintaining regular contact		
Maintaining family life		
Loss felt at significant events		
Pressure maintaining roles		
Changing daily routine	Maintaining family life in the new cultural context requires negotiating changes in roles and responsibilities	
Managing pressures		
Establishing boundaries for English at home		
Mutual support		
Children adjusting to new cultural context		
Children adjusting to altered family context		
Focusing on learning English		
Children adapting		
Developing EL skills		
Concerns over L1		
Maintaining L1		

*Table 2.* Thematic analysis Theme 2: Studying ESL overseas necessitates negotiating changes in relationships.

#### 6.4 Grounded Theory in this Study

On completion of the thematic analysis, a framework was required for the data analysis to take the study to the level of theory building so as to refine concepts. For this reason the researcher employed aspects of constructivist grounded theory as presented by Charmaz (2006) in particular coding processes (open, focused and theoretical coding) and memo writing to make sense of the data collected but also to investigate the data from more than one perspective. Axial coding was not employed as the researcher moved directly to theoretical coding, which, according to Charmaz

(2006), renders it unnecessary. This approach was taken with selected sections of the data that required a more abstract conceptual consideration. In vivo coding was undertaken concurrently with open coding and continued to be considered through the theoretical coding phase. Special terms employed by participants were of two of the three types identified by Charmaz (2006): general terms that were used by a number of participants but had significant meanings; and group specific terms indicating a perspective. These terms were collated using a search function of the program following which they were coded in the same manner as other data.



*Figure 7.* Grounded theory process undertaken in this study.

After collecting and collating the data mass, data were collated initially, so as to gain some clarity, under the discourses stated in the introduction, as follows: Training: the

discourse of English language learning; Transitions: the discourse of the newcomer; Belonging: the discourse of home; Moving On: the discourse of leadership; and Global Networking: the discourse of an international organization. Although there were data common over all the discourses and data that were discourse specific, this collation under discourse proved to be valuable in the initial stages of the grounded theory process. Memo writing began as data were collated and continued concurrently throughout with other coding processes. Writing memos concurrently engendered the development of ideas to a more analytic level also enabling the comparison of codes and categories. The approach employed in this study is represented diagrammatically in Figure 7 (p. 118).

Open coding was undertaken using the responses to the selected questions to begin the analytic process and concentrate the meaning of the data. Line by line and incident by incident coding were conducted concurrently with in vivo coding and the writing of memos. This enabled the researcher to capture the codes and the thinking surrounding that code while still “fresh”. Focused coding followed to synthesize the codes and determine relationships between the codes. Theoretical coding involved encapsulating the focused codes and rewriting memos to integrate the two and to rewrite the analytic story (Charmaz, 2006). Table 3 (p. 120) provides a diagrammatic representation of the encoding performed.

Limitations of grounded theory identified by Corbin and Holt (2005) include “the ambiguity, hard work involved and time necessary to construct theory” (p. 51), as constructing a theory from the data mass generated is time consuming. One particular challenge of adopting a grounded theory approach is moving from pulling together the descriptive data generated to then think conceptually and ultimately theoretically about concepts identified. Corbin and Holt (2005) describe this difficulty as “falling into an analytic rut” (p. 53) brought about by creating categories and concepts that are distinctive but not connected.

Codes	In vivo code	Theoretical coding
Obliged to learn English	Vocation	Learning and utilising English enables fulfilment of vocation
Fulfil "call"		
Spiritual aspects: Beliefs enable learning		
Spiritual aspects: learning as God given opportunity		
Codes	Focused coding	Theoretical coding
Fulfil requirements	Learner goals	ELL goals are identifiable
Develop specific skills		
Improving English		
Competency sufficient		
Courage required		
NS Fluency		
Making connections	Relationships sought	Building relationships a priority for ELL
Intercultural relationships		
Building relationships		
Sharing		
Discuss spiritual matters	English is applicable practically	EL skills become utilitarian
English presents opportunities		
Settling in using English		
Learning local language		
Speaking English with locals		
Using English = belonging		
Teaching English		
Facilitating communication		
English improves		

*Table 3.* Grounded theory code development in this study.

### 6.5 Combining Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory in this Study

In order to draw conclusions from the thematic analysis and grounded theory processes that were undertaken in this study, it is necessary to draw together the results in a more comprehensive entirety. To achieve this, the results of grounded theory and thematic analysis were combined to address the research objectives of this study. This was possible because of the commonalities between the two approaches to data analysis including the common aim to identify central concepts, establish the connections between these concepts and to ensure that these are grounded in the data. Both grounded theory and thematic analysis require research questions that are “open and broad allowing the researcher to discover relevant variables in the data” (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 51) rather than imposing variables on the data.

In bringing the themes discovered from thematic analysis and the codes from grounded theory together, there are clearly areas of commonality which enables a combination of these results. In merging the results, these relationships were identified and the results from the two methods were coalesced under themes.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

For the researcher, undertaking analysis of the data proved to be a daunting challenge. Approaching the mass of data generated with the awareness that data analysis is the foremost concern of any research project, the researcher felt the weight of responsibility to bring the voices of the participants together, not seeking to impose an interpretation on the data, but rather to retain the integrity of the data. The application of thematic analysis and grounded theory principles presented approaches that facilitated the systematic reduction of the data to a more concise, relevant and manageable whole, while relating well to hermeneutic principles. Utilising these methods was of valuable assistance when confronted with the data mass.

Having remained close to the research at every stage proved essential as the researcher had a thorough knowledge of the data overall and was able to recall specific instances that correlated across the data enabling the identification of connections from the beginning. Putting into practice the hermeneutic spiral also proved indispensable as the analysis and interpretation remained grounded in the data.

Although the development of theory was not the prime concern of this study, employing grounded theory methods did help to refine concepts identified through the use of thematic analysis. The choice of methods utilized for data analysis and interpretation in this study proved to be appropriate to achieve the objectives sought.

## **6.7 Summary**

This chapter has presented the approach to data analysis that was adopted in this study. The processes undertaken in the study to generate and analyse data have been examined in this chapter prior to the presentation of the results and discussion so as to ensure clarity for the reader. This chapter has encompassed the following:



- an overview of thematic analysis and grounded theory;
- thematic analysis as applied in this study;
- grounded theory as utilised in this study; and
- the amalgamation of thematic analysis and grounded theory employed for data analysis in this study.

Chapter seven follows presenting the results obtained from the application of methods of analysis and interpretation to the data in this study. The results are presented in themes with subthemes providing additional details.

## Chapter Seven

### Results and Discussion

The results of the data analysis and interpretation, conducted as described in the previous chapter, will be presented and discussed in this chapter which amalgamates the findings from the data analysis and interpretation processes, integrating and discussing them with reference to the review of literature presented in chapter two and relating them to the research objectives of this study.

The results of both a thematic analysis and grounded theory approach are presented as themes that were identified from the data. Four major themes were identified with each of these themes developed under subthemes. Presentation of the first theme is prefaced by a section describing the background to transformation and describes the motivations for undertaking further ELL and motivation for learning in another country.

The first theme *Learning engenders transformation* is presented under three subthemes:

- Attitudes and approaches to language learning undergo transformation in the ELL process.
- Transformation involves changes to self including increasing self confidence and sense of empowerment.
- Transformation involves the development of intercultural awareness including increased understanding of the host culture.

The second theme *Studying and using English necessitates negotiating changes in relationships* is presented under seven subthemes:

- Obtaining endorsement from the wider family to study overseas is of significance to the ELL.
- Studying English overseas necessitates encountering and dealing with issues of separation.
- Maintaining family life in the new cultural context requires negotiating changes in roles and responsibilities.

- Determining the role of English within the family.
- Relationships are a priority for ELL.
- Relating to others utilising English generates contrasting emotions for the NNSE.
- Considering the NSE / NNSE relationship.

The third theme *Affective factors are of significance to ELL* is discussed under the following three subthemes:

- Learn live language.
- Learning English requires courage.
- Learning English requires motivation, justification and perseverance.

The fourth theme *English language learning is functionally constructed and goal oriented* brings together matters relating directly to organizational concerns resulting from the consideration of the data and presented in the following subthemes:

- Learning English contributes to the fulfilment of vocation.
- English language learners have identifiable goals.
- English language skills become utilitarian over time.
- The NNSE functioning in roles of responsibility in an international organization experiences additional pressure from the language expectations of self and of others.

Discernable from the data is the overall tendency for the experiences of those learning English at the time of the data collection for this study to be, what could be described as more intense, more immediate or more pressing. These level two respondents were in the midst of their language learning having studied for approximately nine months and therefore having relatively recently gone through separation from families in their home countries and were currently negotiating a new country and language, having recently returned to study. Those who were in their COS had lived with and used English for a longer period, with English holding a more settled and established place in their lives.

The adult participants in this study were from a variety of cultural backgrounds, contributed their responses from a number of different countries and were at different places in their own journeys learning and using English as a second language. Their experiences of learning English as a second language, of using English in their countries of service and in the organizational context in which they worked, form the texts within which the themes that provide the basis of this chapter were located. In attempting to analyse and interpret experiences it is helpful to be reminded that our experiences and our recollection of them are culturally contoured, which has consequences for how they are regarded in research, as Brookfield (1995) elaborates:

First, experience should not be thought of as an objectively neutral phenomenon... our experience is culturally framed and shaped.... we construct our experience: how we sense and interpret what happens to us and to the world around us is a function of structures of understanding and perceptual filters that are so culturally embedded that we are scarcely aware of their existence or operation.... Because of the habitual ways we draw meaning from our experiences, these experiences can become evidence for the self-fulfilling prophecies that stand in the way of critical insight. (Brookfield, 1995, para. 10)

It is acknowledged also that the researcher comes to this study with experiences that are shaped not only culturally but shaped also organizationally, having worked with the WCHO for some years prior to and during the study, and having taught English as a foreign and as a second language. With this in mind it is acknowledged that the perspectives of the researcher guided the research questions and the choice of the data analysis methods adopted in the study. What was considered important in this was “capturing the essence of participants’ stories while at the same time presenting those stories within a logical framework that gives insight and understanding into possible meanings” (Corbin & Holt, 2005, p. 52).

In the transcription of the spoken texts to written text quoted in this study, references to particular people or locations have been altered so that they remain unidentifiable and participants have been assigned a pseudonym: (PW) indicating a response at level one protocol writing, (I) indicating a level two response from an interview, after which a number has been assigned which reflects the order in which the response

was received or the interview conducted. As this study does not attempt to compare the experiences of the participants in terms of country of origin, gender or COS any references to details such as these have been altered with the exception of references that indicate relationships, such as husband/wife or daughter/son, or locations which are integral to the meaning and understanding of the text. Although transcribed verbatim originally from the spoken text, it is acknowledged that there is some resulting loss in data in the transformation from spoken to written text. Segments of participant responses that have been quoted in this thesis have been edited to be intelligible in written format with punctuation added and sentence construction corrected to render them comprehensible. This helps the reader focus on content without the distraction of grammatical errors, “repetition, false starts and non-lexical utterances such as ‘umms’ and ‘errs’” (Elliot, 2005, p. 52) that permeate spoken text. As Elliot (2005) comments “Providing a ‘clean’ or ‘sanitized’ transcript arguably focuses on the content of what was said. It makes the material easy to read” (p. 52). To ensure that every effort has been made to retain the original intention, once transcription was completed for each interview, the entire interview was checked again in its entirety with the written transcript, and a constant cycle of return to the complete written texts was maintained during the data analysis process.

### **7.1. Theme One: Learning English Engenders Transformation**

From the data a theme that emerged both in the interviews and protocol writing levels was that of transformation. In the process of reflecting on experiences of language learning, respondents were able to identify specific areas of their lives in which they had experienced significant change, and were able to explicate what these changes were. Beneath the overarching theme *Learning English engenders transformation*, three distinct subthemes were identified: transformation involves changes in approach to and attitudes towards language learning; transformation involves changes to self including increasing self confidence and sense of empowerment; and transformation involves the development of intercultural awareness including increased understanding of the host culture. These subthemes will be discussed in the subsequent section, following a brief descriptive background to the subthemes. In the sections that follow respondents are quoted frequently, the purpose in doing so is to provide the reader with a sense of the richness of the responses that participants gave.

### **7.1.1 Background to transformation.**

To comprehend the significance of the transformation experienced by respondents in this study, it is crucial to consider the milieu from and in which the transformation arose. To do so, this section provides background information that helps the reader grasp to some extent the nature of the English language learning experiences for the respondents, both in their early years of learning and later as adults. This section then moves on to consider the motivation that respondents had for learning English as adults and their rationale for learning English in a country other than their own, prior to the presentation of the three sub-themes. The responses were largely descriptive with many common elements emerging from the data and these were drawn together and are presented here as background to the transformation that occurred.

For the majority of those participating in this study, their English language learning journey had already involved a number of years and a variety of experiences. When asked to describe what learning and using English is like for them, participants responded in a storied manner, recalling their early experiences which for the majority began at school, and progressing through their different experiences as adults, culminating with their current use of English. As has been indicated previously (section 2.1), in the literature on adult learning there is recognition that early learning experiences significantly influence the attitude or approaches to learning in adulthood and this was confirmed in this study when relating to learning English specifically. As mentioned earlier in section 2.1, adult learners have a personal history with second language learning that is carried form their early years (Foster, 1997). When asked to describe their experiences of ELL, both what can be perceived as “positive” and “negative” early experiences were described by participants.

Positive early experiences of English language learning create early confidence and anticipation of continued learning (Foster, 1997). One respondent described English as a special subject, recalling the creative methods that the teacher employed to make the learning enjoyable, the respondent still able to recall songs learned as a part of the class:

Our teacher had us listen to English songs that were popular at that time, invited her guests from abroad for us to practise what we learned, and so on. It was practical and purposeful and I still remember a line of one of Simon and Garfunkel's songs: "I'd rather be a hammer than a nail, yes I would, if I only could, I surely would." (PW14)

Another (PW8) related spending extended periods of time as a teenager with family in English speaking environments in inner circle countries, which enabled the respondent to communicate at a reasonably advanced level. Both these respondents attributed their motivation to persist in learning English, continuing to self study following school, directly to the positive early experiences associated with the language. It is notable that both experienced direct practical application of what they had learnt in terms of social interaction employing English as the medium of communication.

However, the reverse is also true as for some whose early experiences of learning English were not regarded positively. For some, learning English at school was unavoidable as it was a compulsory secondary school subject, and a pass mark was required for entrance to university. A recurrent element in the comments was that the main emphases of classes were English grammar, reading and written English including vocabulary; oral and listening skills were not a focus of their classes. The rationale for learning English was not explained and, as a result, English seemed to have no importance or relevance to them, respondents commenting that it seemed meaningless (I 13). Opportunities to speak English were not presented, even within the classroom context, and as a result, their speaking and listening skills were less well developed, some directly attributing this to their early school learning. One respondent who had not enjoyed the English language learning experience at school commented on the feeling of freedom felt having completed the required English classes at university: "I finished English class after my first year at university, I stopped and I was happy! I was free!" (I 10).

For some, early experiences of learning English had been distressing, one respondent describing the experience as "terrible", explaining that they were forced to memorise vocabulary and that they were punished for not doing so. One

respondent describes feelings of fear their English teacher instilled, another of the bad memories associated with early English language learning experiences that had continued to be an influence into adulthood. It is noteworthy that these experiences related not to the language directly, but rather to the classroom context, the teacher, teaching methods or classmates, as the following extracts highlight:

Because at that time my English teacher was a very strict person and I was very afraid of my teacher, so I had a bad experience in English class I didn't want to speak anymore because it was a new language and his methods were not interesting anymore. He was very strict. I was very frightened during that time so I didn't study anymore. (I 5)

For me, when I tried to learn English, at that time it was middle school... At that time, we had to share our table, but my partner was very competitive... So it was very stressful for me... I just lost interest and I didn't like to study English. Actually, I was interested in English but it made it very difficult for me. When I thought about English, I had bad memories. (I 9)

From the data, it is clear that the early school experiences of some were not considered very effective in terms of learning English. Rather than being able to construct complete sentences they learned small fragments that were not connected and not having the opportunity to use the vocabulary learnt at school verbally meant that much of what had been taught or memorised was quickly forgotten. Others found the subject tedious; the consequences of constant memorisation of vocabulary and dialogues without application were a lack of skills or confidence in constructing a conversation. Reflecting on the school experience, some considered that the early years spent studying English were wasted and concluded that could have been a different outcome had there been a different approach to English language teaching: “So, when I look back at that time it was a waste of time. If we learned a different way, now we could speak fluently, because we studied over eight years. It is a bit of a sad story” (I 10).

From these experiences it is understandable that learners developed language anxiety, as factors identified previously in section 2.1 as contributing to language anxiety were common in their experiences: a lack of opportunities to practise in



social contexts and a lack of input, and language instructors who correct mistakes in a humiliating manner. When language anxiety continues into adult language learning contexts, it can be debilitating, as related earlier in section 2.1 (Tanveer, 2007).

There were those, however, who had found that, upon returning to ELL, the early focus on grammar in their English language learning had provided a good foundation for their English language learning as adults.

### **7.1.2 Anticipating the ELL experience: motives and rationale for undertaking further ELL.**

When contemplating the move to a new country to learn English, reactions are varied. From the data it is clear that the motivation for learning English was to fulfil the requirements of the organization as, having decided to join the WCHO, workers from non-English backgrounds must obtain the required IELTS (or equivalent) score before progressing through the system to work with the WCHO.

For these people from non-English speaking backgrounds, being able to speak English to a reasonable standard was regarded as essential, enabling them to join the organization and to communicate in international multicultural teams within the WCHO “without speaking English you cannot survive” (I11). From the data it is clear that the need for communication in international teams in the future was a motivating factor for respondents in the decision to learn English; reaching a good level of English was regarded as crucial for their future in the organization.

From the data it is clear that learning English is regarded as another phase in the process necessary to fulfil organizational requirements, yet it is also part of the call, the sense of vocation: to work overseas, they had decided to work with the WCHO and to do so they were required to speak English and therefore they needed to undertake ELL. The decision to learn English was made to fulfil a sense of vocation or call, reflecting Tisdell’s (2003) comment earlier, noted in section 4.8, that a person’s spirituality significantly influences decisions such as choices about work which is regarded as vocation. At times, however, these decisions are not easy decisions to be made:

Actually, my aim is not from myself. Actually, I didn't want to study English. But when God called me to be a cross-cultural worker, I had to choose a specific organization, and so I chose [the WCHO]. We have to speak English; we have to communicate with other workers in English, that's why I should learn English. (I 13)

#### ***7.1.1.2 Motivations for learning English in another country.***

With the widespread availability of English language classes globally it is of importance to consider the motivation for moving to another country to learn English, a decision that has significant consequences not only for those moving but for the wider family, involving upheaval and considerable financial expense. Yet those who were currently training with the WCHO and many of those who were working in their COS had chosen to study English in a country other than their own. When asked to explain why they had chosen to learn English in another country a number of common reasons and motivations emerged and these are detailed in this section.

Although the location in which English is studied is not dictated by the organization, from the data it is clear that for a number of respondents the initial impetus to study overseas had come at the recommendation from the organization's national director in their country, at times not just to learn or improve their English but also to spend time in a different, usually Western, cultural context which was regarded as beneficial preparation for their future. The recommendation to study English overseas also came from others who had already had their own experiences in English speaking countries.

Although it was acknowledged that learning English and improving English language skills in the home country is possible and that there are a plethora of courses available, accessing courses is not straight forward as there are limitations on the number of places and teachers available. Having already spent time learning the language in their home countries, some concluded that there had been little improvement in their language skills, even after attempting to learn English over a long period, as the following indicates: "For a long time I tried to learn English in my country, but it took a very long time, and my English hasn't improved, actually" (I 7).

From the data it is clear that attending classes in the home country was not regarded as effective; regularly attending classes was possible, but life in between classes functioned in the L1: “You have your two hours class every week and then you go away and speak in your own language again” (I 2). Without the opportunity to regularly speak English between classes, learning again becomes limited to reading and studying English grammar which was regarded by participants as ineffective.

Although the learner may have a reasonable vocabulary, there are limited opportunities in the home country for speaking practise and consequently the English learnt in class is forgotten over time: “My husband and I felt limited studying English at home because we learned many English words, but we couldn’t practise. So, almost all our memorized English was gone” (I 8). It was perceived that learning English whilst remaining in the home country takes a longer period of time, requiring more effort, commitment and motivation on the part of the learner as, being surrounded by people speaking their own L1, there were not opportunities to speak English and it was noted that access to NS of English was very limited. For others from countries where English is spoken frequently, there is still not the motivation to use English because it is more efficient and expedient to use the local language, as, “when you have people around you who can talk your language, you would not speak to them in English, your language is the language you can speak and you know every word in it” (I 3).

Language learning in the home country is conducted in the midst of normal everyday life which continues to demand time and attention while studying English adds yet another demand to already busy schedules; work and other responsibilities to family and relatives have to be maintained whilst trying to study. Living in another country for formal language study allows learners to concentrate fully on language learning without such distractions as work, wider family, or social commitments that in the home culture may be obligatory.

Although it may be possible to learn English in the home country, learning English in an inner circle country compels one to learn to be able to communicate with locals, as being surrounded by people who do not speak your L1 gives you little choice but to communicate in the target language. Respondents related how, when studying

overseas in a multinational context, they needed to communicate with others in their student body using English. From the data, it is clear that respondents were specifically seeking this type of context so that they would essentially be compelled to speak English, “you have to speak English. There is no other choice” (I 3); “you’re forced to speak it” (I 2), so as to function effectively in daily life. In doing so, there was a perception that the learner developed language skills faster and easier or more naturally than if studying in the home country, as the following confirms:

Studying and living in a country where I was surrounded by English speakers was a great help. Our student body was made up of many nationalities and English was the language we communicated and had to communicate with one another. (PW 14)

From the data it is apparent that learning English in an inner circle country enables what was perceived as a more natural method of learning language through everyday routine and involvement in an English speaking context. As described by a respondent, “Language could be like air: we don't perceive the existence of air, but we breathe through air. Even though we don't recognise it, through situations we learn English” (I 4). Learning through daily routines, activities such as shopping, catching buses, driving or walking around a city, and interacting socially was considered the “best” way, a comparatively effortless and rapid method as opposed to learning English in the home country where it was just another “job” or responsibility.

From the data it is apparent that there was a definite choice by learners to study in an inner circle country to avail themselves of the benefits they perceived as being afforded in having access to native speakers of English specifically. In being in an inner circle country they would have unlimited access to native speakers; they are everywhere, all the time, whereas in their home country they were surrounded by speakers of their L1; “Here, all people always use English. I can hear English everywhere, and I can use English everyday with other people” (I 7). In these countries the learner can access “live English” (I 6) as opposed to learning English from a book. Living in an inner circle country enables the learner to develop a “sense” (I 9) of the language that cannot be gained from studying grammar and vocabulary in isolation or out of context. This perception is supported by Norton and

Toohy's (2001) comments earlier in section 2.2 that context and access to social networks are essential in helping develop language proficiency.

Living and learning in an inner circle country presents opportunities to access the language in context and, in doing so, gain insights into the historical and cultural background and communication style in the country. This gives additional insights into the language and understanding that are not possible in the home country and makes language learning more effective. The learner also has access to the English used in different discourses as an everyday experience. This contact with English in use across a wide spectrum of people and discourses is not possible in the home country. It enables the learner access to language in use that would not otherwise be possible.

Some respondents questioned the need/necessity or requirement to learn English in another country. The financial cost for those moving was pointed out by one respondent, who stated that learning English abroad "wastes a lot of money" (I 9). The respondent suggested that an alternative could be to recruit native speakers of English to go to live and teach in the respondents' countries of origin. The benefits of an entire family moving to another country when it was possible for them to learn English in their home country, was also questioned. From the data it is apparent that respondents did have pragmatic economic reasons for choosing particular countries, finally deciding to study in Australia as, at the time, the Australian dollar was not strong. For some, there was a consideration or a calculation of return for financial investment: moving to another country would be at a cost financially but there would be a more rapid improvement in English than was possible studying in the home country, therefore they concluded that it was more prudent financially to study overseas.

Moving overseas to learn English involves disruption to established lives, occupation and relationships and this can be complex and difficult. There are many issues to consider, many people and relationships entailed and many changes that are involved in the process. Interview respondent 12 spoke of the necessity to "lay down our situation," indicating a surrendering of the established relationships, housing and

employment, all of which were important to the respondent, in order to “leave our place”:

I really enjoyed my work. I love my friends and family, they too love each other. It was very difficult to lay down our situation. Just my wife and I had to leave our place. It was very hard for me. (I 12)

For this respondent, the move overseas to study involved a deliberate consideration of the steps that were involved in the decision making process with the ultimate aim of becoming a cross-cultural worker; to be a cross-cultural worker it was essential to learn English and to learn English it was necessary to study overseas; “I decided that if I wanted to be a cross-cultural worker, there is no choice, I had to learn English. At first it was uncomfortable. Nowadays it's okay”. (I 12)

Having considered the milieu in and from which the respondents experienced transformation, it is clear to see that learning an additional language as an adult can be regarded as a disruptive event or a disorienting dilemma, as described by Mezirow and Associates (2000) earlier in section 4.4, with the move to another country compounding the level of disruption greatly. This backdrop to transformation gives insight into the contexts of the individuals involved in which transformation occurred, described in the following section.

### **7.1.2 Attitudes and approaches to language learning undergo transformation in the ELL process.**

Participating in learning language in another country involves exposure to a different education system and within that to a variety of teaching methods that may be dissimilar to those learners have encountered in their home countries. These also require a period of adjustment for the learners. A number of respondents remarked that their language learning experiences had affected the way they studied language, commenting on the different teaching styles they had experienced and different learning strategies that they had implemented in the new context and the effectiveness of these and contrasted them to the way they had studied English in the past. Studying language in another country, learners encountered learning opportunities presented in various ways that they had not experienced before.

Reflecting on early experiences of language learning in response to the interview questions asked and then making comparisons with experiences in adulthood enables these language learners to consider and compare the effectiveness of learning and teaching methods they have encountered in their years of ELL. Respondents were able to observe these differences after studying in the different learning context. There was a realisation that various strategies they had employed in their early language learning had not been effective; that despite a number of years studying English they had still not been able to communicate verbally. The strategies identified by respondents as ineffective were prioritising reading, memorisation of vocabulary and grammar above development of verbal skills during the initial stages of language learning.

When I was in high school I just tried to memorise vocabulary and study grammar but the results were not good; I could not say anything. I could not understand my reading. When I studied at a private language institute realised I realised that the studying way and the teaching way was different; I realised that only studying hard at a desk is not the best way to learn English.  
(I 15)

As adults they experienced teaching and learning methods that they regarded as effective, they had also developed and implemented different strategies to improve their own language skills which were regarded as effective. These strategies contrasted with those they had employed previously, described as studying “sitting down on a chair” (I 6), and involved actively engaging in what was identified as the concept of learning “living language” (I 4). This involved utilising opportunities afforded in the host country such as taking advantage of opportunities to meet local people and participating in the local community or visiting local places of interest rather than simply studying them in the classroom. Learning in this way was active, practical and applied.

Although there was expression of regret by some that early years of English language learning had been time squandered, those considering further language learning in the future had already considered the approach that they would take to the new language, using a new set of strategies, some of which they had already implemented in their English language learning. In the future they planned instead to employ a

more “natural” approach, involving living in the new cultural context, living and communicating with native speakers. These learners were able to consider their learning strategies critically, implementing changes and adopting different learning strategies which resulted in them becoming more independent and self directed in their learning. This aspect of transformation saw learners empowered to make decisions regarding their future language learning methods revealing the development of reflective practice in their language learning.

For some this transformation in attitude towards learning English had begun prior to returning to formal ELL and had provided the impetus to start. Overseas experiences where an inability to speak English proved an impediment was one common motivating factor to return to studying English as an adult, as the following illustrate:

I have visited over 14 countries... But while visiting other countries, I didn't need to speak English well; I could speak basic English, if I wanted to buy something, or to ask directions, like this. I didn't need to speak English well. But when I visited India, I went to Nagaland... When I visited there, there were lots of memorial areas, and memorial buildings, and... while they explained about a special incident, I was keen to speak more. I was eager to investigate this incident, but I couldn't speak English. They ... can speak English well... if I could speak English well, I could learn more and I could communicate with them. I had lots of questions, but I couldn't explain. At that time, I felt that I needed English. I first felt it. (I 13)

I studied English in middle school but it was not interesting to me. So I didn't study English. The first (time) I realised I had to study English was after the first ...trip. We went to the Philippines, and I was afraid of writing down names, or information to enter the country. So, someone who could write down the information helped me. That was the first time I realised I had to study English. (I 15)

For some, there appeared to be a particular moment in time when they came to a realisation that learning English was necessary for them personally, so that they could go on to achieve their own goals and this occurred prior to being informed about organizational requirements.



Frankly speaking, I didn't study English and secondary school. I was a patriot; I didn't want to learn English. After graduating, I decided to be a cross cultural worker, and then I started to study English. But when I got the motivation to study English, it stimulated me to study hard. (I13)

### **7.1.3 Transformation involves changes to self including increasing self confidence and sense of empowerment.**

The most common change noted by respondents was an increase in self confidence which they attributed to their experiences learning English as adults. This confidence was manifested in a number of different ways. The first was a willingness and confidence to speak to native speakers where, prior to learning English as an adult, respondents had, at times, actively avoided any people from countries other than their own or had not spoken to them and did not want to communicate with them, mainly for fear of not being able to communicate successfully. This again reflects Tanveer's (2007) description of characteristics of language anxiety where, because of their feelings of inadequacy, language learners avoid situations where they fear their low proficiency will be evidenced. Respondents expressed experiencing feelings of nervousness or of being afraid when meeting native speakers of English prior to learning English as adults, "Before if I met a native speaker, I was afraid and I didn't say anything" (I 12). A fear of communicating or being unable to communicate when placed in a situation where they had to acknowledge a NSE resulted in the development of strategies to avoid such situations occurring, "I was afraid that if I met him I couldn't say anything, so I couldn't go out" (I 10). Clearly what was being described was long term language anxiety, as described previously.

The development of self confidence in communicating with native speakers was noted as of considerable importance to those who were studying English, as the following expresses: "The best thing is that I have confidence, so I forget to be nervous with native speakers" (I 14). This sense of empowerment, the transformation from fear to self confidence, for some also progressed to pleasure at having the ability to be able to communicate with NSE in English, as I 4 indicates, "So I felt extreme pleasure to start to communicate with others in English".

A successful experience of learning English, as quantified by attaining the official test scores required, was encouraging to learners. A priority in learning English in an inner circle country was to achieve an official recognition of their level of English, and once this was achieved respondents noted that they had confidence and courage to consider learning another language, should they be required to or choose to in the future. Respondents stated that they had confidence in their language learning abilities and they now regarded the possibility of learning another language positively. Respondents also expressed having confidence to travel to other countries now that they had learned English, where previously they had felt scared (I2) or nervous (I18). Having this confidence provided a sense of freedom to meet people from other countries and presents opportunities to build relationships with people from other countries, regarded as a change in lifestyle (I 18).

Respondents observed that language learning provided opportunities to develop their problem solving skills as they faced and overcome difficulties; meeting the challenge of language learning had given them a sense of confidence to meet what they described as other barriers or difficulties. They expressed confidence that successfully negotiating the “very big mountain”(I 9), or the “barrier” (I 4) that is the process of learning English in a country other than their own had enlarged their capacity to cope in the future in other areas of life as the following evidences:

I think before I studied in English class, English was a very big mountain for me, which I couldn't climb over. But I think, after English class, there is no mountain I can't climb; it means that I can try everything and it will be possible. (I 9)

I think it is a process to overcome a kind of barrier... It is hard to learn English but through the hardship of learning English I have confidence that the experience of overcoming this kind of barrier could help me when I face another difficulty. (I 4)

One respondent also noted that success in learning English in a country other than their own had given a sense of self confidence that they are able to complete something successfully away from the normal support network available to them in their home country. This respondent observed that having persevered in Australia

despite difficulties she had proven to herself that she could persevere in another culture. The respondent considered this a significant achievement and that by proving to herself that she could persevere in language learning and achieve a level of success was “something nobody can take away” (I 2).

For some, the English language learning process had initiated significant changes to identity and these were clearly articulated by respondents. Concepts described indicated changes not only to personality, but to the sense of self. These changes were for some the result of conscious effort. There was an acknowledgement by these participants that in the ELL process they had intentionally become more extroverted to function effectively in the new culture and context. To maximise the benefits of learning English these people had consciously decided to change their natural behaviour; whereas in their own culture they had been reserved, this did not help them achieve their language learning goals in the new culture and consequently, to learn English they had to be more outgoing, as PW 12 explains, “I used to be an introverted person and rather shy, but I realised that this character didn’t help me to practise English... So I have forced myself to be more like an extroverted person and take extra courage to be outgoing”.

Learning English in a new country also presented the opportunity for the learners to consciously reinvent themselves through distancing themselves from the person they were in their first language. This was regarded as an enjoyable process, allowing the learner to be “different in a different language setting and that has an attraction of its own. It gives you the option of exploring new patterns ... and start again to some extent” (PW10).

However, other changes went beyond conscious effort to the acknowledged development of a new identity. One respondent described a new self developed in the new cultural context: “I would say I was a different person back home. I had to build up a new me in Australia to be able to learn English” (I 2). When describing this new self, the respondent explained that it involved a new sense of awareness of other people and of dependence upon others where, in the cultural context of the home country, they had been independent. This new identity involved feeling vulnerable and involved “taking off your mask” (I 2), so this vulnerability is visible

to others. It involved asking for assistance from others as was necessary to negotiate the new cultural context. The participant noted that on return to the home country, there was an initial period of confusion, of feeling “lost” (I 2) and of a desire to keep both old and new selves before slipping into old patterns of being and relating, but with differences that were noticeable to and noted by others.

On return to the home country, these changes can be noticeable to others, particularly to family members but may not be understood or appreciated by others in the home country as noted by respondents who acknowledged becoming more direct when communicating than had been the case before learning English. In the home country, this was not the cultural norm and led to difficulties with family members, as the following passage indicates:

I was not used to being a very direct speaker, but learning English for many years, made me a direct speaker. My relationship with my family, it's very different, you know. They feel like I became another person... I became a direct person, and that is very rude in my culture. So when I talk to my family members, I shouldn't say it that way, but without thinking I just say everything that I feel. Sometimes I had some difficulties with my siblings. I expressed my feelings to my siblings and my mother as well. My mum got angry, "I didn't teach you that way," she said. (I 17)

The respondent went on to explain the need now to be aware of the manner in which she communicates when in her home culture.

#### **7.1.4 Transformation involves the development of intercultural awareness including increased understanding of the host culture.**

Developing skills to communicate in another language creates opportunities for developing relationships with people from other cultures which would not otherwise have been possible. This widening of social contacts provides insights into people from different cultures and an intercultural awareness as a result of learning and using English. A number of respondents commented that they had a greater understanding of “Western” culture through learning English with one also commenting that to learn English “we should know culture” (I 4) to have an understanding of words and their use. In reflecting on this, a respondent commented

that through learning the language of a country one also develops an understanding of the different “frame of thought” rendered by a language other than one’s own which they described as involving the history, culture and thinking system of that culture. Through learning English the respondent could also understand some of the cultural elements involved in the language and therefore develop an understanding of the people who speak English as their first language. The respondent remarked that they had made an effort to “think according to frame of thought which English has” (I 4). Storti (2001) concurs, commenting that knowing the local language to some extent can “have a direct impact on preventing cultural incidents. Just by virtue of understanding what’s being said around you, you can better understand cross-cultural encounters” (p. 98).

The differences between cultures were acknowledged but also a comprehension of the similarities between people beneath their linguistic and cultural differences was described by participants. Respondents observed that through the language learning process they had developed an awareness of the overall vulnerability of people; that “we are different, but we’re all human, with the need to feel loved and appreciated, to have peace” (PW 13). There was also a development of empathy for other people who struggled with the language learning process or who struggled in their COS when called upon to communicate in English.

These realisations or observations seemed to create a willingness to form relationships across cultures and an appreciation of the reciprocal nature that was possible in such relationships, while the potential for misunderstandings was acknowledged, as the following extracts illustrate:

Also, sometimes, I thought, they are similar to me; they just have a different language and different culture. I can make friends with them, and also they can be friends to me. (I 14)

Being able to communicate in that language has helped me into a number of deep relationships with people of other cultures whom I would not have met otherwise. I learned to take the risk of being misunderstood and misjudged and I learned to laugh about myself. (PW 8)

The transformation that the respondents described in their intercultural understanding is congruous with the findings of King (2000) who observes the following:

All the accounts that were of a cultural theme were tied to preconceived ideas and beliefs about cultures; the learners had to face a disparity in their belief system, evaluate the difference, and make a decision to accept a new perspective. These are very vivid, classic examples of the kind of perspective transformations adult ESL learners' experience. (p. 77)

It is of significance that although the term culture shock was mentioned specifically only twice and commented upon only briefly by two respondents in the study, the experiences described and discussed in this theme could indicate experiences of culture shock (the initial response to the new culture) and adjustment (the process of modifying behaviour and attitude to the new culture) as circumscribed by Sussman (2000) earlier in section 2.4. These areas of transformation discussed in this theme also reflect the development of elements of intercultural identity as suggested by Fenimore (1997) described earlier in section 2.4, specifically the acceptance of original and new cultural elements; increased self knowledge and inner resilience; and increased resourcefulness to deal with new challenges.

As described earlier, this study sits where there are commonalities in the literature from the discourses of adult learning, specifically transformative learning; cultural studies, specifically cultural shock and adjustment; and adult second language acquisition/learning. This can be clearly seen in the theme of transformation described in this section as the theme of transformation is commonly acknowledged in all the discourses named. Is the transformation described by participants the development of intercultural identity, or transformation due to transformational learning experiences or due to second language learning? The attempt to delineate and affix one label is perhaps, pointless. The transformation described by the participants and discussed in this section is possibly occurring in the process of meaning making or individuation through learning and using English as an adult in another country.

In addition to engendering transformation on an inner personal level, learning and using English can bring about changes in the relationships of the language learner and speaker with others. This aspect will be addressed in the section that follows.

## **7.2 Theme Two: Studying and Using English Necessitates Negotiating Changes in Relationships**

People dwell in families. While who or what constitutes a family may be determined to a great extent by culture or individual family interpretation, any decision to move to another country affects both immediate family members and the extended family. Members of families have roles and responsibilities within their immediate and wider family circles and moving to another country for any purpose has an impact on family members remaining in their home countries; grandparents, parents, in-laws, siblings and older independent children, as well as on those family members accompanying the learner overseas, such as spouses and dependent children. The affects observed include the concerns of family members before family members remaining in their home countries, maintaining relationships while in another country learning English, and for some, dealing with changes in relationships upon their return to their home country. For those studying, issues encountered include seeking family support for the move, dealing with separation from family and friends, adjusting to role and relationship changes upon returning to study. These follow a temporal order related to the changing contexts encountered, reflected in the following subthemes which cover obtaining endorsement from the wider family; encountering and dealing with separation issues; negotiating changes in family roles and responsibilities; through to determining the role of English within the family.

### **7.2.1 Obtaining endorsement from the wider family to study overseas is of significance to the ELL.**

Families react in different ways to the decision by family members to travel overseas to learn English. Although it was not stated directly by participants that approval to study overseas was sought, it is apparent from the data that receiving the assent or blessing of the family to the decision to move overseas was of importance to those relocating and this would be anticipated as a normal part of the moving process.

The experience of one respondent illustrates the process engaged in by the wider family before a decision to support the move to Australia to study English was arrived at. There were initial concerns about the welfare of the participant and family who were planning to study overseas as the prospect of their family members

travelling overseas for an extended period brought about fear of the unknown on behalf of their loved ones. Not having experience of the country themselves, their parents were concerned about how they would survive; what would they eat and how will they live in a different country and culture? After this initial concern and further discussion, the family recognised that they would miss their family members for the time they were away, yet they concluded that the experience of living in another country, the many different opportunities it would present and the new people they would meet would be beneficial to them. It was then concluded that the decision to go was the right one:

At the moment we feel lonely, but it doesn't matter. In the near future you will be able to experience wonderful things! So, maybe you can meet many people, many multicultural people. It is a good decision to go to Australia.

(I 6)

Families continue to provide motivation, and encourage learners to persevere; pleased that their family members have the opportunity to study English or to travel overseas to study in other countries they had not. One respondent felt motivated to succeed and to attain the exam score required, because of his son's expectations that, after two years studying English in an inner circle country, his father would succeed: "We worked very hard because my son knows we are learning English here. And if we fail, how can my son understand? „You studied English for two years and didn't pass the exam'; that was a very good motivation" (I 11).

Families demonstrated their support in different practical ways such as through financial assistance, through sending gifts of food or by supporting them in a spiritual sense through prayer for them, all of which were appreciated by the learners, although those supported financially were aware of the financial burden that their studies placed on the family members remaining in the home country. Families expressed a sense of pride in the achievements of those who were studying English overseas. This pride was not necessarily related to achieving any measureable standard of English, but rather pride that their family members had moved to another country and had successfully made the transition to the new context. One respondent noted that as it was not the first time they had moved to a new country, their family considered their move to Australia to learn English as "natural" (I 7). The



respondent commented that they received financial and prayer support from their parents who agreed that their move to Australia was in their best interests. The respondent thought that their family was proud of them and that they did not worry about them living in Australia whereas they had been very worried about them living in the country they had been working in formerly.

There was a perception amongst some families that learning English was necessary, even essential, for the future of their children and their home country. The parents of one respondent advised that it was crucial to learn English to be able to communicate with the companies that were about to locate in their country. They considered this as inevitable for their country; that they would have to open up their markets for companies and people who communicate in English:

My mother said to me, "You have to learn English because in the near future we also have to open our gate so many English companies, and English people will come to our country. Many, many people. So, we have to communicate with them and now learning English is very essential for your life." You know, I agree with my mother and my father also. (I 6)

Families also perceived access to English as allowing access to the Internet and other communications technology so that on return to their home country or even while they were studying English, the learner would be able to assist the family in negotiating ICT.

### **7.2.2 Studying English overseas necessitates encountering and dealing with issues of separation.**

Separation from family and friends can be difficult at any time, even though the amount of time normally spent together differs between families, friends and cultures. For some, the physical separation, being unable to meet and see each other, was more challenging than for others. For family members remaining in the home country, the separation from children and grandchildren can be particularly difficult. Those who have moved to another country to study are also aware of the physical separation the move creates and the difficulties or emotional pain of separation that it can cause. People generally do not want to cause their family members any suffering. Older relatives are perhaps affected most by the separation from their

children and grandchildren, feeling isolated as a result of losing the face to face contact with those who have gone abroad. One respondent related how her father-in-law was unwell physically and emotionally after they had left, which they attributed directly to the separation; not an easy experience for either son or father, as the following demonstrates: “My husband’s father was sick after we came here physically and emotionally, because they are very close. So when we came here, he was very sick” (I 15).

From the data it appears that at significant times in the life of a family, the separation is felt more keenly. Family members want to be present physically at important times such as at the birth of a baby or at an important wedding. One respondent related how her brother had to delay his wedding until she returned from studying English overseas. Although developments in technology make it possible to communicate easily with those overseas, regular meeting face to face is valued highly in many cultures so as to maintain community, as explained following: “In our culture we are concerned about relationships. That means we want to keep talking and to keep meeting each other is very necessary to live life as a community” (I 12).

Maintaining regular contact with family members was considered by respondents to be of high importance in maintaining relationships and technological developments make this easy and relatively inexpensive to achieve, while respondents noted that when regular communication was not maintained for some reason, family members became anxious. For others, the close relationships of friends were missed; those friends who know them well and where there is a deep level of trust. These types of relationships take time to develop and, where there is a language difference, it is more difficult to reach that level of intimacy.

### **7.2.3 Maintaining family life in the new cultural context requires negotiating changes in roles and responsibilities.**

For those studying, returning to study as an adult has its own challenges for the person individually, and when negotiated in the context of a family moving to study together there are additional challenges to relationships. Changes are negotiated on a personal level, but relationships also change and adapt to the new context. When

both partners in a marriage are studying rather than working there are changes in daily routine. For couples, the time spent together increases when compared with what they had been accustomed to in their home countries where work dominated their lives. This release from work commitments to become students was regarded as beneficial to the family and the regular holiday periods throughout an academic year gave families the opportunity to travel together the new country; something many respondents were not accustomed to as part of their normal routine in their home countries.

Although maintaining employment commitments may not be an issue for families studying in another country, studying occurs in the midst of maintaining family life. Parents manage dual roles as learners and parents, each role with its own responsibilities and stresses. Respondents identified three areas of priority in their lives specifically:

- studying English and preparing for exams;
- living in a new culture and context; and
- caring for their families.

It is of significance that the pressure of preparing for an exam, the results of which could determine the future of the individual or family was mentioned as a specific stressor. From the data, it is clear that there was a period of adjustment necessary for families to develop a workable routine and then ascertain how they could manage priorities and responsibilities. This reflects Storti's (2001) assertions, discussed in section 2.5, that the loss of routine is a major contributing factor to stress and to decreased energy levels available for higher order tasks when a family relocates in a new country. Pressures on families were surmounted by sharing the responsibilities for daily tasks such as child care and housework. A respondent compared the experience of living in America as a tourist and as a single person, without the pressures of studying or maintaining a family, with the current circumstances learning language with her husband and daughter. She conveyed the physical weariness she felt with all these various demands on her combined:

Just living in another country is not difficult, but I have to do other things at the same time. It makes me tired; it makes it hard as a family. Fortunately, my husband is quite a good helper. He helps with house work and taking

care of our daughter to give me some time to study. So it is very good for me. (I 15)

A time of negotiating the role of English in the family and establishing boundaries for its use also appeared to be a common experience. Although learners had the goal of learning English and were eager to speak English as much as possible, negotiation and mutual agreement about the use of English in the home and the time spent studying as opposed to time spent in family involvements was necessary. To illustrate the type of pressure these families faced, one respondent explained the many demands on his wife's time and energy in her roles as a language learner preparing for a crucial exam, the mother of three small children and wife of a husband who was also studying, with the additional dimension of that this was occurring in the context of a new country and culture. There was constant pressure to fulfil these responsibilities, roles and commitments, her husband aware of the pressures and expressing a sense of pride at the way his wife was able to cope:

I think my wife has the hardest job to study English here, because she has three children and a tough husband. Our daughter is still young, and she needs to feed her milk. This means that during the night, even during the night, she is woken several times, and she has to feed her. During the daytime, she has to look after two naughty boys. And sometimes while she was preparing for the exam, we can get a little bit nervous. This means we need our own space, but we can't have any. Still, we have to look after our children. I believe my wife did well. I think she had a difficult time preparing for the exam. (I 13)

Studying together as a couple, and even more so when in the same class, there is the possibility of an element of competition developing between husband and wife, and this was acknowledged in the data, not as a negative factor but rather a positive:

Sometimes we competed with each other. Sometimes I listened well, better than my husband, while he is better than me at writing. Sometimes we thought if we combine to make one person, we would get a perfect score. We enjoyed it. (I 8)

It was clear from the data that the couples learning English together in this study supported each other and this was a source of encouragement for both as they could practise speaking English together in a natural way that would not have been possible if only one were studying. They were also able to support each other as they could understand the challenges language learning presented. Respondents noted this as a change; they had become as a couple more mature and supportive of each other and that they felt closer and more confident as a family. There was also awareness or realisation of individual strengths and weaknesses and those of their partner, one respondent acknowledging that his wife had a particular “talent” for learning English and expressed a desire to encourage her to continue to improve.

For those studying in inner circle countries, an issue of major importance to families is the ongoing education of their children in the new country. Children studying in inner circle countries attend local schools or day care facilities and they themselves have their own experiences of learning a new culture and language. Although there is some anticipation of a period of adjustment for which preparations can be made, families can never fully anticipate the way in which their children will react to their new circumstances. Watching children as they struggle in the new cultural and educational context is difficult for family members and parents feel responsible for the adjustments that their children have to make when families move to an inner circle country to learn English.

When, on arrival in the country, children have minimal English language and attend local schools where English is the language of communication, they are managed in different ways, at times being placed in classes below peers of the same age. This arrangement creates additional stress for these language learners who are then grouped with younger pupils, at times with younger family members, resulting in feelings of humiliation, as illustrated by the following:

I think my two sons also had a difficult time, because they couldn't speak English. Especially my first son, he felt that he was first and he wanted to be a good brother for his younger brother, but he couldn't, especially as he was in the same class with his younger brother. It was shameful. But after 1 1/2 months he was promoted up a class. (I 13)

Although the respondent did not detail the struggles of his sons, Khadar (2006) presents an insight into difficulties that can be encountered by the “ESL newcomers” when first negotiating the inner circle school context:

For such learners to be admitted into the social milieu of a school, they must first master the social, linguistic, and cultural codes of the dominant group which exist in a tacit social hierarchy within a school. Often these ESL newcomers are relegated to a subordinate status, partly because they are seen as racially and culturally different, and partly because they do not know the particular choice of words, phrases, and phonological forms that will allow them greater access in the dominant speech community... Kubota (2001) alerts us to the "unwelcoming atmosphere" (p. 31) encountered by ESL learners in urban schools, who are often victims of ridicule because of their "funny accents," their low level of English proficiency, and their dress. (p. 628)

Even for pre-school aged children, the adjustment to a new culture can present challenges when people in the new context appear physically dissimilar to those in the home country and they speak an unfamiliar language. For some, having come from societies that were much more homogenous, these new contacts can actually be quite frightening for children as respondent I 4 relates:

I think it was a very big stress for my son. He was just two years old when he came here. He was afraid of new people who spoke another language and had different features. My son was very afraid. (I 4)

Even at a young age, children also find that others of their own age from different cultures play in different ways which may not be understandable initially. Although children normally develop English language skills reasonably rapidly, the period in the interim can be stressful for the individual child and for the family. At times, families may not expect or be prepared for the difficulties that their children face when adjusting to the new culture, rather expecting their children to integrate seamlessly into the new context.

Children are also required to adjust to the new roles within their families; their parents now having study commitments which change family dynamics, established

routines and the demands on parents' time. Parents hope to optimise any opportunities they have in an English speaking context to practise their spoken English and to study and perceive that they are spending less time giving children their undivided attention than they had previously. Understandably, parents are aware of these changes and tend to feel responsible for these added stressors, leading to feelings of regret and guilt for any anguish they perceive this causes their children. One participant commented on the loss of his two year old son's "support group", in his home country he had been surrounded by a large group of people who knew him well and cared for him. Once the family moved to a new country, the direct contact with this group was lost. As a parent, the respondent considered this a negative aspect of the move and was concerned that there would be lasting "damage", referring to psychological damage, to his son, as a result of this change.

Parents also adopt new roles as language learners. In the new cultural and linguistic context, they function in different capacities to those in their home country. Negotiating daily interaction in the new context can be challenging and children witness the struggles that their parents face associated with language and culture issues. Children can at times develop initial language skills more rapidly than their parents, adding a different nuance to their relationships, as the following illustrates: "My son was five years old; he spoke English very well at that time. Sometimes I spoke on the phone, but my son disappeared because he didn't like my pronunciation or the way I made sentences in English" (I 10).

However, despite the challenges with which every family member contends, having the opportunity to live in a new culture, learn a new language and build new relationships with others from different cultures was considered to be a benefit of moving country to learn English. Building relationships with children in the host country was mentioned as particularly significant. It was anticipated that this new cultural experience would give their children a broader worldview than those who had not had the opportunity.

#### **7.2.4 Determining the role of English within the family.**

As was mentioned in the previous section, when a family moves country to undertake English language learning they must contend with many challenges.

Another dimension of the move that requires attention is the role of English within the family and it is apparent from the data that this requires negotiation at each stage of the family experience and renegotiation when contexts change. The issues faced are different at each stage of the families' journey with the WCHO, but also have a temporal ordering that reflects not only the level of proficiency in English that parent and children have achieved, but also the roles they are fulfilling with the WCHO and the context in which they are living.

During the period when the family is training in another country, there is an expectation that the children will also develop EL skills while their parents study and this is regarded as a priority for the family. Overall, the experience of living in another country to learn English was considered by respondents as a positive experience for families as they concluded that their children adapted well. Although there were initially challenges adjusting as described above, when interviewed after nine months in the country, these had mostly been resolved. They had found that living in an inner circle country, it was easier for them as a family to speak English and a number observed that their children were now more fluent in English than they themselves were: "I think my children had a very good experience here. They didn't know English at all, but, now they can speak English better than us... They like to speak English" (I 7). Parents noted feelings of pride at their children's English language development and their confidence using the language, mentioning particularly that their children's pronunciation was good, as the respondent remarks in the following extract:

He is already greeting people first and approaching them saying, "Look at my car!" I'm proud of my son because he just very young but his pronunciation is quite good. He makes sentences very well. I think it's a good time to learn English. (I 9)

For those recently arrived in their COS, the role of English requires renegotiating in the new context. Of foremost concern to parents at this stage is that children will lose their mother tongue, most being surrounded by English in their COS. Parents were anxious to maintain their children's L1 and to do so chose to use their mother tongue in the home rather than English. In their COS, their children have many opportunities to speak English, attending international schools and having



involvement in WCHO team activities on a regular basis, all of which are in English. These parents noted the importance of preserving their mother tongue as their family's first language; the overall concern was to ensure the smoothest possible integration of their children into their home culture in the future, once the family returned from working overseas.

For those who had been in their COS for a longer period of time and were well settled, English had become part of their life together as a family, so much so that it was difficult to determine the affects of English upon the family, as PW 15 explains, "English is not just impacts on our life. It has become a part of our life. So it's hard to answer specifically" (PW 15). English, rather than being regarded as a separate element, had become integral to their lives. For families where both English and at least one other language are spoken, utilising English is a natural, routine and fundamental part of their lives. Working as they do in a context that has international influences, English has also become "required and not an option" (PW 11) for not just the parents working with the WCHO, but for the family. Families integrate English into their way of life, to be utilised as necessary along with other languages, while maintaining their L1: "We can communicate in English within our family, if we want... However, because we wanted to make sure our children could speak their first language well for their re-integration into our culture, we always spoke our language and still do" (PW 3).

From the data, there appear to be three distinct phases of English use within the families of the participants. During the period they can be considered as involved in the *Training* discourse, families sought to learn as much English as possible. The priority that for all family members would develop their proficiency and to facilitate this they moved to an inner circle country. Parents were pleased with the progress that their children had made having faced the many challenges involved. The second phase reflects the period covered by the *Transition* discourse, where parents have fulfilled the English language requirements of the WCHO having achieved English language proficiency as indicated by satisfactory test results, had completed any other training required by the WCHO and had moved with their families to their COS. From the data it appears that the families of the participants in this discourse have many opportunities to develop their English language skills while in their COS

and that the main concern for parents during this phase is the retention of the mother tongue as the family's first language to ensure the children reintegrate into their home culture on return. The third and final phase that was observed in the data relates to the *Moving on* discourse where families are settled in their COS having lived there for some time. In this phase English has become integrated into the everyday routine of the family; functioning well in the COS requires proficiency in English but having achieved it, English has a stable and an established place in the daily life of the family and can be used when necessary.

### **7.2.5 Relating to others utilising English generates contrasting emotions for the NNSE.**

Emerging from the data it is clear that for NNSE, relating to others utilising English generates contrasting emotions but that there are also commonalities in the emotions experienced. These commonalities emerge across interview and protocol writing respondents; those who are in training, new arrivals and those in leadership positions, but there are also perspectives unique to each.

For those who were at the time of the interview engaged in EL learning, there was general acknowledgement of progress made since beginning their period of study. Some described how their feelings of shyness or fear at not being able to communicate have been overcome and that what they perceived as successful "encounters" in English increased their levels of confidence in using English. They felt confident in their ability to communicate and to self-correct or employ compensatory strategies to ensure that any mistakes did not hinder communication. Among this group of people there were those who described communicating in English as natural, comfortable, interesting and pleasurable.

However, these language learners were aware that there remained areas of difficulty that needed to be addressed. There were feelings of frustration at the limitations that they experience when attempting to communicate in English which they ascribed to a number of factors. They observed that successful communication was for them still context, interlocutor and discourse dependent, in that they felt more confident in familiar contexts communicating with known interlocutors on familiar subjects. There were a limited range of topics they could discuss to any depth due to the

limitations of their vocabulary and outside of these they felt restricted in their ability to express themselves. They found communicating with new native speaker interlocutors difficult, particularly those who did not understand their circumstances, and that they were studying English at that time. They were frustrated by the limited range and depth of emotion that they could describe and the restricted range of English structures that they could employ and found communicating in formal situations more difficult than less formal or casual situations.

There are those who have worked in multicultural teams for a long period of time for whom utilising English has become a natural, automatic part of everyday life. For these people, English is integrated into their lives so that they use of English without noticing, they are barely aware that they are using the language. They feel comfortable using English and feel comfortable in contexts where English is being used.

For others more recently arrived in their COS, the emotions generated by the utilisation of English were also contingent upon the context or interlocutor involved. There are those who feel more comfortable and confident when other NNSE are present when they are communicating in English in a group situation and communicating with NNSE generally easier and less stressful, as the following illustrates: “I felt more at ease listening to and speaking with other non English speakers and the local people who again had a very different accent” (PW 3). In contrast however, there are those who find communicating with other NNSE more difficult, and it was noted that adjusting to new accents was the major difficulty.

It is clear that, for some, the emotions experienced when using English fluctuate with their perception of the degree of success at communicating in the encounter; when successful encounters occur, the NNSE feels confident, when not successful the NNSE feels “useless” (PW 11) regardless of levels of proficiency. Even though their level of English is adequate, these NNSE perceive that English is and will always remain a “second” language for them and they are aware of areas of their English usage they perceive as weak. It is of note that these English language users who have achieved so much in other areas of their lives still exhibit levels of language anxiety when using English. Respondents at level one who have been using English

in their COS still articulated feelings of inadequacy in their level of English language proficiency.

The data conveyed a complex set of factors involved in communication between NSE and NNSE. For some NNSE, the presence of NSE creates a sense of insecurity; they feel less secure about their English language skills. It was indicated that communication with NSE involves negotiating British/American/Australian nuances, involving the use of metaphors, idioms and comprehension of English spoken with different accents. Of particular difficulty to NNSE is the NSE use of humour which is understandable only by other NSE with common experiences. Use of humour that others cannot follow results in feelings of isolation and exclusion, as the following indicates:

The most difficult thing is to deal with humour. Regularly I sit in meetings with native speakers who make all kinds of jokes and I'm simply not part of it. I feel left out and unable to connect to the group. (PW 13)

The data indicated that being a NNSE and a leader has benefits for the multicultural team in a number of ways. Those leaders who are from NNSE backgrounds can comprehend the challenges that other NNSE encounter enabling them to empathise with others facing similar difficulties. They can be easier for other NNSE to understand when compared with NSE and can facilitate communication between NSE and NNSE. They can also use their own experiences to help others, are regarded as "one of them" the NNSE group, and are able to present the NNSE perspective to others, as the following illustrates:

Actually there came the time when I realised that I have moved from a beginner who tries to understand native English speakers, to a place where I am looked on as the English speaker and try to understand where the other non- native speakers come from. (PW 14)

As a NNSE and a leader, being able to speak English gives you options that you would not have otherwise and circumstances arise where communicating in English is appreciated by the interlocutor. As a leader, one can also advocate on behalf of others from one's own country and language.

### 7.2.6 Relationships are a priority for English language learners.

From the data it is clear that learners regarded the formation and strengthening of relationships with other speakers of English in general, but NSE specifically, as essential to their language learning and to the development of language skills, but also crucial on a personal level. There appeared to be a distinction between friendship and relationship that emerged from the data, although not explicated by the respondents. The use of the collocation *build* with relationship indicated that inherent in relationships is time spent together; bonds are formed with individuals over a period of time. The terms *sharing* and *sharing my life* used to illuminate the concept indicates mutual self disclosure on a deeply personal level, perhaps indicating some level of confidentiality and exclusivity. The discussion of spiritual matters was also involved. It was perceptible that relationships formed across cultures are not only appreciated but also yearned for and coveted when established.

From the data, it is observed that building relationships is a more complex process for the second language learner than it would normally be in their home country and first language. Without some English language skills, relationships with others who do not speak their mother tongue would not be possible, as indicated in the following remarks, “If I do not have English skills to communicate with them, I couldn't make connections and relationships fully. So after I improved my English, I could make relationships with them. It was very good for me, beneficial for me” (I 6). English language learners find that local people in particular do not show much interest in them initially and that the language learner often has to initiate contact. However, people appreciate others showing interest in them and this can develop into conversations and friendships. The language learner needs “to get out there and jump over their own shadow” (I 2), to be proactive in approaching others and in initiating conversation, “It needs to me be active; I have to approach them firstly. I have to tell something to them” (I 7).

Relationships were also considered valuable for the connections they encourage with others, specifically with others within the WCHO, and also because they facilitate understanding between cultures. It was apparent also that to form relationships at the level sought requires advanced English language skills and that the expression in English of emotions at such a deep level can be difficult as this use of language is not

normally taught as part of any curriculum. However, forming relationships also facilitates the development of English language skills as the interlocutors actively attempt to express themselves on a more personal and intimate level. This again relates to Norton and Toohey's (2001) assertion, noted in section 2.2, that acceptance into a peer or social network in the target language community is of great importance to the adult language learner. It is possible that the desire for deep relationships may be culturally or personality based and yet it seems rather to be a general desire to be considered part of a peer or social network within the target language community. For the respondents in this study those networks may also be within the WCHO.

### **7.2.7 Considering the NSE/NNSE relationship.**

From the data it is clear that there is a tendency for respondents to categorise or classify people with whom they were involved organisationally in terms of three categories, those of native speaker of English, non-native speaker of English, and foreigners or consider people in terms of these categories. However, these categories also appear to have a temporal aspect, changing in application as respondents' progress through organisational experiences and roles.

There appears to be a tendency amongst those in training to consider all NSE one category with one language and culture, so called "English culture", without any differentiation between nationalities. As noted in the section above on the theme of transformation, the relationship between adults returning to English language study and NSE is transformed as language skills develop. Prior to language study in an inner circle country there is an avoidance of any person considered a foreigner or a native speaker of English, even when opportunities are presented to communicate with them in a familiar environment, as the following expresses: "Also before I studied English, I couldn't greet them, and I couldn't have eye contact with them" (I 16). When in a situation in their home country where a NSE was present, for example at a meeting or when visiting their regional office, participants described how they experienced feelings of fear and as a result did not attempt to communicate, as indicated by I 12:

Before, if I met a native speaker, I was afraid and I didn't say anything. In my home country, at the regional office, there used to be some guests from

other countries, but I didn't want to meet or talk with or communicate with them.

It appears that prior to learning English in another country their contact with NSE had been limited and there were those who appeared to be apprehensive about face to face contact with a native speaker of English. Speaking to native speaker of English made these respondents feel nervous as they lacked confidence in their English skills. At times, this apprehension or even fear of NSE, or fear of having to communicate with NSE, impeded the daily life of the NNSE, as the following illustrates: "I was afraid that if I met him I couldn't say anything, so I couldn't go out" (I 10). It is not clear from the data whether the feelings of apprehension were experienced to the same degree with or without a mediator present. These feelings of vulnerability threaten the self-concept of the ELL, as discussed with reference to Sorti (2001) and Foster (1997) in section 2.1 above.

To succeed in learning English, it was regarded as essential to have contact with native speakers of English and spending time in an inner circle country was regarded as preferable, "If I don't want to go, if I don't want to meet a native speaker, I can't learn English"( I 12). One advantage of studying English in an inner circle country is the access it gives to NSE, the perception being that, in an inner circle country, the ELL can practise with NSE as much as they require or desire. Language learners found beneficial both contact with native speakers of English indirectly, such as by being present in a context where English is being spoken, and directly, when practising their spoken English and listening skills with a NSE. In the inner circle country they developed confidence to speak to NSE and were able to understand more about their culture and lifestyle, making friendships possible. They found it helpful to speak to NSE and so to practise spoken English, particularly with those who understood their needs as L2 learners, and with those who responded to requests to adjust the speed at which they spoke or to communicate using simple sentences. There were those participants who found NSE easier to understand than NNSE from other countries, yet others found the opposite as they found that NSE tend not to articulate clearly. The data also revealed the desire of participants to work with and to be able to communicate well with NSE, some even expressing as their goal the achievement of native speaker like fluency.

In addition to the transformational aspect of these relationships, over time there appear to be further changes indicated in the data in the nature of the relationships between the NSE and NNSE working for the WCHO. After some time in their COS, working as a NNSE in a multicultural team that includes NSE, changes in the way people from other nationalities were described emerge, as presented diagrammatically in Figure 8 (below). There is a tendency to regard the composition of the team in terms of NSE and NNSE, two distinct groups, and with a subcategory labelled “English speaker” also delineated. There is a tendency also to differentiate between nationalities; team members and others are described not only as NSE or NNSE but are identified and categorised according to their nationality, for example, as Korean, Brazilian, or German. From the data, it is clear that there are those who are considered members of the NSE group within the team, were correspondingly further distinguished in terms of nationality, for example, the Americans or the Australians. The NNSE category was further described in two groups; the “beginner” and the “English speaker”, as identified in the following:

Actually there came the time when I realised that I have moved from a beginner who tries to understand native English speakers, to a place where I am looked on as the English speaker and try to understand where the other non-native speakers come from. (PW 14)

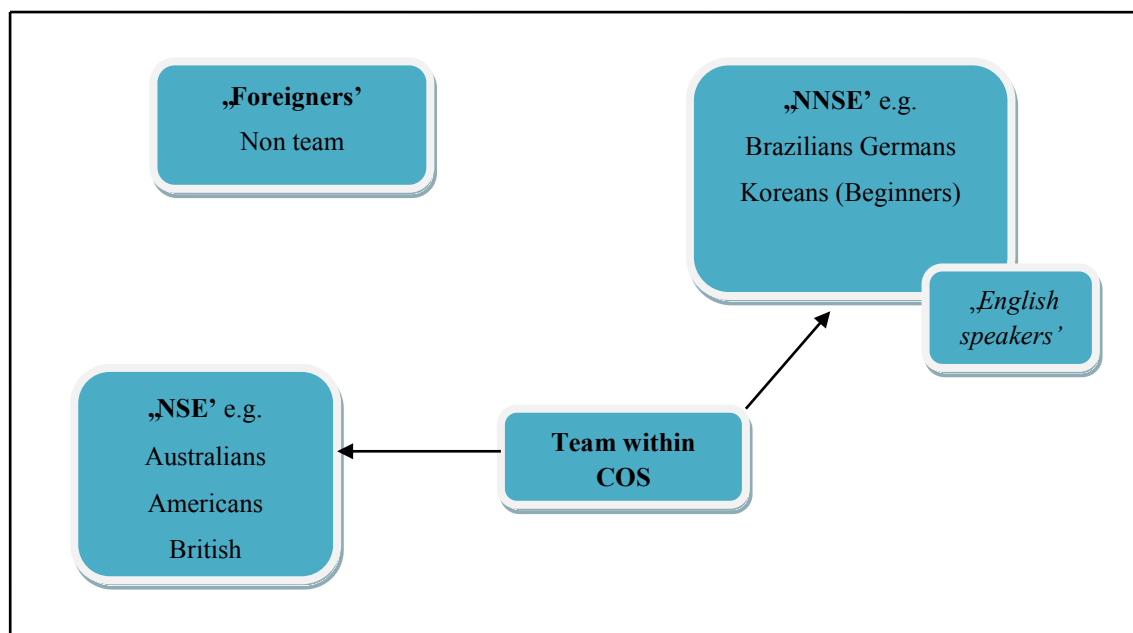


Figure 8. Categories of identification within COS.



From the data it is acknowledged that difficulties arise between NSE and NNSE within team and organisational contexts, with particular contexts when difficulties are most likely to occur identified. Examples given were team meetings or at conferences when people are gathered in larger groups. In this type of context the NSE in the groups have a tendency to use idioms, metaphors and humour not easily understood by those from other cultures. These can only be understood by those with similar experiences; a shared knowledge of history or shared corpus of literature, art, or shared experiences of contemporary culture. However, for those who do not share these experiences, this can be an isolating experience, leaving the NNSE feeling disconnected from what is happening, feeling insecure and inferior. Although this may occur when any group of people with a shared language come together, it was regarded as inconsiderate to exclude others, as the following observes:

I remember a situation that happened after a team meeting when I suddenly seemed to be the only person who didn't understand what the others were talking about in their native tongue! It made me aware once again how important it is, not to say just a matter of courtesy, when together with friends to use a language that everybody is more or less familiar with. (PW 14)

Those considered *English speakers* were identified as those who have been in their COS for a longer period of time and who have well developed English language skills. These participants regarded well developed English language skills as advantageous but were still regarded as “one of them”; the NNSE group. They tend to assume unofficial roles as mediators between other NNSE, particularly those from their own country, and the NSE on the team, facilitating communication and assisting in conflict resolution. They also perceive themselves as a type of representative for the NNSE group at conferences, where they ask questions so as to seek clarification for the NNSE involved. As there are NNSE who find the English spoken by other NNSE easier to comprehend than that of NSE, the *English speakers* can facilitate communication during meetings.

The use of the noun *foreigner* as applied to a group of people was notable. At times it was used by those who were studying English as a synonym for NSE of English. For

some, their first contact with a *foreigner*, a person from another country, occurred during the period when they were learning English as an adult. The application of this label *foreigner* to include all people who are from another country continued in the inner circle country where they were learning English; they described the local people of the country as foreigners, rather than describing the people in terms of their nationality. Only one respondent of the eighteen interviewed used the term to refer to herself in the context of describing how it felt communicating in English: “I’m comfortable, I don’t worry about my faults or if my grammar is not good, or if my pronunciation is not good... As a foreigner, I think I’m not Australian” (I 10). For those working in their COS, the term *foreigner* was utilised in a different manner by NNSE, differentiating between their team members and all other expatriates in their COS, as the following indicates: “But English was the language I communicated with my team mates and other foreigners working with us” (PW 14).

From the data it seems that NNSE seem to feel more comfortable when in the company of other NNSE, or when there are other NNSE present in meeting. When they are the only NNSE in a group they are aware of it and described feelings of insecurity when this occurs and, when the situation is ongoing, feelings of loneliness can be experienced, as PW 14 observes: “As the others were all native speakers there were times when I felt somewhat at a loss to explain or say what I really meant or misunderstood and there were feelings of loneliness”. It would seem important to minimise occasions that contribute to these feelings of otherness to maintain healthy self esteem amongst workers and to ensure that language divides do not become divisions in teams. In their COS, NNSE continued to seek NSE assistance correcting their English language in general but particularly their written communication in English.

### **7.3 Theme Three: Affective Factors are of Significance to the ELL**

In this third theme discerned from the data is the importance ascribed to affective factors for successful ELL to occur. As indicated earlier (section 2.2), scholars have developed lists of attributes that the good language learner exhibit and have identified preferred learning strategies, while the importance of the reception of the learner actions in the socio-cultural communities into which they want to integrate as a factor in developing language proficiency has also been highlighted (Ellis, 1985;

Brown & Rodgers, 2002; Norton & Toohey, 2001). In this study a list of attributes and learning strategies was ascertained from the data, drawn from the experiences of the adults learning English as a second language who participated in the study. When asked to describe the challenges that they faced learning English and what it takes to learn and use English, learners described measures that they had found effective in their own ELL. There were a number of commonalities with the lists proposed in the literature were identified, but additional elements were added and with a clear emphasis on what could be described as affective factors

Following are the elements of second language learning that were considered important by the respondents in this study. There are those features listed previously in section 2.2, and these were expanded with the following additions by the respondents based on their own experiences: learn live language; learning English requires motivation, justification and perseverance; and learning English requires courage. These will be explicated with more details in the section that follows.

### **7.3.1 Learn live language.**

Taking every opportunity to learn the language, particularly *living language* was regarded as essential to learning English, as a respondent explains, “To learn English it’s important to live in English circumstances... we have to think in English and we have to speak and write, meet people, everything in English” (I 7). Living language as indicated in the data can be delineated as language in all forms as it occurs in natural or routine usage. Respondents illustrated this by way of the following example: rather than studying a local place of interest in the classroom, go to the location, converse with people there, and read the signs around the area providing information. Gaining firsthand knowledge of the place and the language that is associated with it, in other words experiencing that place, making the language associated with it live or alive to the language learner, “We can experience that place. If we don’t experience it, it’s not alive” (I 6).

It was apparent that living in an inner circle country context and utilising opportunities that this affords, both during class and outside class hours, facilitates learning live or living language. This could be considered as attending to meaning rather than form or code or as I 9 describes, developing a “sense of language”.

Although learners were not given a list of learning strategies to choose from or to rank, their responses do reflect some of the elements of the lists presented previously with additional, very specific pragmatic suggestions for efficient ELL, as follows:

- writing regularly about experiences and emotions (for example, in a journal);
- reading written texts out loud;
- listening to recordings (including music with English lyrics);
- watching television or movies (without the aid of subtitles);
- listening to radio broadcasts;
- comprehending passages read from context (without the aid of a dictionary);
- reading regularly; and
- meeting local people in local contexts (such as participating in local groups and community activities).

Clearly, the attention to meaning is of importance to the respondents, reflecting attributes 2 (good language learners seek out all opportunities to use the target language) and 3 (good language learners make maximum use of opportunities afforded to practise listening and responding to speech in the L2 addressed to him and to others) from Ellis' (1985, p. 122) list.

However, like Norton and Toohey (2001), the element of context was also considered to be of importance to the respondents; they regarded involvement in social networks within the L2 community as essential to enhance language acquisition. Attending to code or form was also regarded as important, but secondary to learning in a practical way or learning from living life in the inner circle context. It was the application of code that was considered central, learners creating their own opportunities to apply the code that they had learnt in class in a practical way through conversations with others and directing conversations to incorporate the element that they wished to practise, as the following illustrates: "I studied English in class, after that I practised my learning with many friends at college. Sometimes I asked them questions so I can listen to a good sentence" (I 6).

Seeking opportunities to learn English can also entail creating opportunities. This could include building relationships, as mentioned in the previous section. Forming relationships with speakers of the L2 was considered essential to efficient and

effective language learning. From the data it appears that for the participants forming friendships entails meeting regularly, taking an interest in and focusing on others, and speaking naturally in casual contexts for a longer period than is normally possible in everyday social activities. Not only does the language learner benefit from the relationship aspect and practice or application of language skills, but can also gain insights into the culture of the L2. A number of respondents noted that they cultivated relationships with particular types of people, older people and children specifically, with whom they felt comfortable, “Yesterday I visited friends from my church. They are over 70 years old, elderly people. I could have such a good relationship time with them without barriers. We could talk very comfortably with them” (I 6). This again highlights the importance learners themselves placed on participation in social networks within L2 communities, reflecting the concern of Norton and Toohey (2001) for learner participation in the sociocultural community of the target language.

This contrasted with the suggestion that to actively limit involvement with people from the same L1 was necessary to make progress in English, participants advising that it was preferably to choose to study in a location, described in the following quotation as an “isolated place” (I 5), where there were few people from the same L1:

We have a very strong cultural background, so we want to use our mother tongue, just very naturally, because it's our first language and it's very easy. But if someone wants to learn English ... they have to find an isolated place, and then they can learn English without using their language. (I 5)

It is of significance that, although respondents were not presented with a list from which to choose, the data reflected the attributes listed in the literature concerned with the importance of making every effort, taking every opportunity and actively seeking to use the target language in speaking with and listening to English being spoken.

In addition to the elements discussed, the respondents noted as of equal importance the more subjective elements in learning listing courage, justification, motivation and perseverance, expanded in following sections.

### **7.3.2 Learning English requires courage.**

Learning English requires learners of all personality types to overcome feelings of self-consciousness and from the responses this was described as requiring courage on the part of the ELL. From the data it is clear that respondents recognised the necessity to overcome their self-consciousness so as to maximise their opportunities to practise listening and responding to speech in the target language, reflecting the third attribute in Ellis' (1985) list above in section 2.2, that good language learners will "seek out all opportunities to use the target language" (p. 122). From the data it also appears that general exposure to spoken language, even in a passive sense or when initially not fully understood, was regarded as beneficial in ELL, although to do so also requires courage.

Relating to others in a second language can be daunting, particularly for people who have a more reserved personality. From the data it is apparent that this is felt particularly acutely when relating to NSE, as illustrated by the following: "In order to speak English well, first be brave and don't be afraid to speak English with native speakers" (I 11). From the data it was clear that being willing to make mistakes or errors at times involved relinquishing any sense of pride that inhibited interaction, rather "You have to let yourself be a fool sometimes... It takes a lot of courage to talk with other people, not to be afraid to make mistakes" (I 2), directly reflecting Ellis' (1985) 8<sup>th</sup> attribute, good language learners are "prepared to experiment by taking risks, even if this makes the learner appear foolish" (p. 122).

Having courage also required ELL speaking directly in English without translation from the L1 was considered to be essential, the "secret" (I 11) of effective language learning but this also requires courage: "Bravery! We have to speak directly in English" (I 11). Learners described coming to this realisation as a significant moment in their language learning, for one a moment of epiphany, having already attempted to learn the language by translating from the L1 into the target language, but finding it ineffective. One respondent describes this concept of communicating without initial translation as two "lines"; one the L1 and the second the L2, and a process of "turning off" one line as the other was required, as the following explains:

We already have our mother tongue line, we can use it anytime, but if we want to make English line we have to turn off the other line while we learn

English... At first, I'd just write in my first language, subject here, verb here, object here and I'd think about it and then I'd say it. But thankfully now I can just think English. I don't think about it in my first language. (I 5)

### **7.3.3 Learning English requires motivation, justification and perseverance.**

From the data it is clear that the strength of motivation to learn English was also considered important by participants in the study, reflecting attribute 7 on Ellis' (1985) list, good language learners "possess a strong reason for learning the L2" (p. 122). Motivation can provide the impetus to begin language learning as an adult while also enabling the language learner to persist in their efforts, as the following explains: "I think the most important thing is motivation. Why should we study English? ... But when I got the motivation to study English, it stimulated me to study hard" (I 13). Adults may also require some justification of their plans to learn English, particularly when this involves the move to another country. Without a rationale to justify this, there are no grounds for taking the time and effort to learn English, as the following illustrates: "If I had no ambition to join the organization, I could not study English, because it is not simple. There is no reason I should stop my work" (I 4). For this respondent, learning English to work with the WCHO was a justifiable reason to leave their employment, a move of major significance for any adult.

Motivation is also important when learners find themselves persevering with English language study through periods of despondency. It was noted that ELL requires persistence not only in terms of language learning requiring more time than was initially realised, but also persisting through periods when learners feel disheartened or discouraged with their language learning. Contributing factors identified from the data included the perception of a lack of progress, holding unrealistic expectations, and comparison with or perceptions of being in competition with others. Reactions to these types of dynamics in the language learning process may reflect the individual personality of the learner. The following extract illustrates the emotions one learner experienced when having difficulties communicating whilst in a group of NSE "my feelings were „Oh, what's wrong with me?“ I didn't want to say any more, because they didn't understand me; my pronunciation is not very good, my English is

not very good, and I just think I have to be quiet” (I 5). The respondent describes the signs acknowledged by Tanveer (2007) as the manifestation of language anxiety, as described in section 2.1; engaging in negative self talk and pondering what they considered as their poor performance.

To overcome or cope with these periods of self doubt, learners employ individual strategies that they had developed over time. Learners identified utilisation of positive self talk as beneficial, relating how they actively directed their thinking to build confidence: “Honestly, whenever I met a teacher or our church members I control my mind, „You can do it, you can talk with them ... You have confidence.’ So every day I control my mind” (I 14). They also found it of benefit to remind themselves of their original purpose for undertaking the language learning, as the following relates: “I thought, okay, I came here to learn but if I can speak, why do I have to come here? That makes me ... keep going” (I 1). Reminding themselves of their identity as a second language learner already fluent in their L1 also helped overcome discouragement, as the following extract illustrates:

But my character is very positive so I thought, “Never mind if someone doesn't understand my English.” Sometimes, I thought, “Do you speak my language? Do you speak one or two words in my language? I'm better than you, because I speak my language very well and little bit of English”... So I overcame low self-esteem many times. (I 10)

However, the encouragement of others was also considered of importance in helping adult ELL overcome periods of despondency; language teachers, friends, other students or family were sources of encouragement noted by learners. It is of significance to note that the role of the teacher seemed to go beyond that which occurred through the delivery of lessons reflecting King’s (2000) comments, related in section 4.6, that the attitudes of teachers towards learners was of significance in fostering transformation and this same concept also seems to emerge from the data in this study. King (2000) states that “important to these learners were the transparency, enduring encouragement and hope that they saw in their teachers... From the learner’s perspective the person and personality of adult educators are not separated from their professional responsibilities” (p. 81). From the data it appears that participants had received encouragement on an individual basis from their



English language teachers and that this had been significant in helping them overcome periods of difficulty or through times of despondency.

Emerging from the data it appears that spiritual beliefs were also a source of encouragement to learners, serving to refocus them on the purpose of their language learning and enabling them to cope with periods of discouragement, as the following illustrates:

I feel disappointed; I got discouraged a lot, because my English did not improve even though I studied hard... So, at that time, God told me, just in my heart, "What is your purpose? Who calls you? If God calls you He will give you the ability to overcome the situation. It's not your work". (I 4)

In addition to the attributes that correlated with those outlined by Ellis (1985), it transpires from the data that respondents considered three other elements important in their English language learning experiences: cultural understanding of the target language; teaching style and methodologies utilised by teachers; and having realistic expectations as an adult English language learner.

Gaining cultural understanding of the L2 was regarded as indispensable to language learning as, not only does it make language learning more interesting, but also provides insights into the worldview in which the language is immersed, one respondent recommending that, "While studying English, study English culture. I think that language is one with culture" (I 13). From the data it is clear that those who had been using English in their COS for some time were aware of specific cultural nuances in the use of English by others and had found negotiating these testing, as the following explains: "I had to transpose my English ... to British English or American English... My English had to be idiomatic and metaphorical. Language among native speakers had to have either a British tune or American one" (PW 11). Working with a team of people from different cultural backgrounds who utilise English as NSE or NNSE entails not only negotiating personal differences, but the cultural nuances in their use of English, as "it is not only because of language difference but also its culture that is contained within the language; I had to continuously jump from one culture (or a way of thinking) to the other" (PW 12). Again, for those in fulfilling leadership roles in the WCHO, leading a multicultural

team necessitates not only an awareness of individual personality differences and cultural differences amongst their team members, but also cultural differences in English language use. Those fulfilling leadership roles are required to develop the ability to work with these differences on an ongoing basis.

This contrasted with those who were in training at the time of the interviews. They appeared to be largely unaware of the cultural differences in the use of English at that stage, describing more an “English” culture in which they seemed to encompass all native speakers rather than differentiating between NSE nationality, as illustrated by the following: “I enjoy English, because when I studied English, I learned not only English but also that culture and atmosphere and the peoples’ thinking” (I 6).

Teaching styles and methodologies employed are regarded as important in the second language learning process: effective teachers make the language learning process interesting and exposure to different methodologies and a variety of learning opportunities presents the learner with new ways with which to approach language learning, illustrated in the following: “The teachers ... they have given us various opportunities to learn English, such as excursions and presentations and role-play, like this. It caused me not to be bored!” (I 13). For the language learners in this study, a sense of trust in the overall structure of their English course and in the ability of the teachers to deliver learning opportunities that were appropriate to enable them to fulfil their goals was of importance, as illustrated by the following:

I felt stress but deep in my mind, I am very comfortable learning English, because I trust this system. I trust my teachers, the staff and this system... I decided that I trust my teachers, and my school system. So I just do my best, what my teachers recommended what my teachers suggested... But it makes me very comfortable and stable. (I 15)

From the data it is clear also that those involved in ELL had discovered, through their own recent experiences, the necessity to keep their expectations realistic. It was noted that language learning takes time, possibly more time than language learners anticipate initially, and so expectations can be overly optimistic resulting in discouragement when they go unmet, as the following explains: “Learning language takes a long time, so just one or two years is not enough to learn language, especially

English. Sometimes our expectations are higher than reality so we could be discouraged and depressed” (I 4). Expectations may also be influenced by awareness of the strengths of other language learners, comparing one’s own efforts or progress with that of others, which can cause undue stress or language anxiety, as described in section 2.1. The language learner needs to find his/her own study pattern and adjust their own expectations of themselves so as to study more effectively, as revealed in the following:

At the beginning I thought that I needed to hurry to learn the language because other people were doing something so I have to do something like them. But I realised that I can't do everything, I can do just a few things to improve my English. (I 15)

#### **7.4 Theme Four: English Language Learning is Functionally Constructed and Goal Oriented**

This theme identified in the data relates specifically to the organizational experiences of the participants. Four sub-themes were identified which aligned closely to the participant’s length of time involved with the WCHO, the stage they were at in their experience of the WCHO, and the roles that they were fulfilling. The four subthemes identified were:

- English language learners have identifiable goals.
- English language skills become utilitarian over time.
- The NNSE functioning in roles of responsibility in an international organization experiences additional pressure from the language expectations of self and of others.
- Learning English is a means of fulfilling vocation.

These will be described in more detail in the section that follows.

##### **7.4.1 English language learners have identifiable goals.**

The long term goal, in a sense the overarching theme for these respondents, was the sense of vocation which permeated their responses. These adult English language learners are able to articulate specific goals they aim to achieve and these goals are oriented both to the present context and the perceived future. It seems that they have obvious, anticipated or expected organizational goals and broader personal goals. For some respondents there were identifiable levels of priority or an order of

anticipated fulfilment, whereas for others the goals were viewed as achievable concurrently, and of equal importance.

One goal identified was the *fulfilment of organizational requirements for a minimum EL level*, attaining the level would enable respondents to continue to the next stage in the process of joining the WCHO. This goal was inextricably linked to fulfilling a sense of vocation; to become a cross-cultural worker in a COS working in a multicultural team, elucidated above. To reach the minimum EL level required by the organization necessitates studying English.

Respondents also considered the future beyond the immediate context, the future once they had attained the required level. They perceived that working in multicultural teams would require well developed English language skills, as included in the team would be both NNSE and NSE; to function well within their team requires well developed English language skills. The goal of *attaining the skills to enable communication in English* had both a present and future orientation. Communicating in English, as perceived and elucidated by participants, denotes conversing, listening, being understood and understanding others without difficulty. Participants were convinced of the importance of being able to communicate well in English to be able to work effectively with their team in the future. In their current context, the ability to communicate in English was perceived to be of importance in facilitating the development and maintenance of relationships.

Two distinct levels of English language skills emerged as goals; those of native speaker-like fluency and competence in communicating. Participants both expressed the aim to attain native speaker-like fluency explicitly and articulated the concept. The ability to communicate in English like a native speaker was regarded as necessary for working with NSE in a multicultural team context. The concept of achieving native speaker-like fluency was expressed in the data as being able to speak English confidently in any context or situation without any barriers, communicating with others freely and naturally, and expressing ideas and opinions without hesitation, with some expressing the aim to teach English in their COS. Participants expressed this aim for fluency as a goal that they considered achievable, in fact realistically quite possible. As noted previously in section 3.9, native speaker-

like fluency is generally no longer regarded as a desirable outcome by English language teachers and it is of significance that learners in this study continue to regard it as a personal goal.

In contrast to this goal of communicating in English with native-speaker like fluency, for others attaining a level enabling communication in English in a competent manner was regarded as sufficient for their needs. This was their goal; to be able to communicate with others and to accomplish the tasks required was sufficient. Attaining well developed skills across all four areas evenly is considered adequate for their needs while perfection is not essential. Communication in English was regarded in terms of its functional purposes, as the following illustrates:

For me, I am satisfied when a person can understand me and when a person can read what I wrote and I can understand what I'm reading, but I don't care how many spelling mistakes I've made there as long as they can understand me, I sort of think what more do I need? (I 2)

This respondent appears to reflect the concept of accented intelligibility which is generally considered a more appropriate goal by ELT, as discussed previously in section 3.9 (Timmis, 2002). Beyond that, having advanced EL skills opens future opportunities for employment outside of the WCHO.

#### **7.4.2 English language skills become utilitarian over time.**

In the multicultural team working in the COS rather than in the home country regional office context, English language skills prove to be utilitarian in many contexts, both for team members and for those with positions of responsibility. Proficiency in English is considered essential for communication with NSE and NNSE from other L1 backgrounds as communication within the team is in English.

Initial settling into the COS is negotiated with the team in English including orientation to the context, fulfilling local government requirements, locating and settling into accommodation and team activities. The study of the local language may be accomplished through the medium of English using textbooks and teachers adopting English-to-local language approach. Contexts where communication with the locals was accomplished through the medium of English, both initially and for

periods of up to a year were also described by participants. The ability to communicate using English means that in the COS people can form friendships, express themselves, be involved socially, be part of the team community and feel a sense of belonging, as PW 16 commented, “I felt comfortable communicating with other among expatriate workers in English and sense of belonging, even though English is not my mother tongue and there are still many areas that I need to develop using English”. The converse can also be true as when the person does not have a good understanding of English, these settling processes are difficult for both team members and the new arrival and a sense of isolation may be experienced: “When the other person does not understand English well, communication and help is difficult for that person” (PW 8).

For those in leadership positions, English makes possible the completion of the tasks required and the fulfilment of the role they maintain. English enables team members to be part of the international WCHO community, communicating directly with colleagues on an international level directly without the use of a translator. English is a tool for communication in the COS, presenting opportunities not otherwise available with, for example, some participants involved in teaching English in their COS. It is of note that participants observed that their English language acquisition did not cease once they had arrived at their COS, but rather they made considerable progress in their English skills over time through involvement with their multicultural team, the other activities they were involved in and through the contacts that they had in their COS. From the data it appears that this could be described as English language acquisition, largely without conscious effort to learn the language, as was the experience of PW 1: “After 17 years in my COS my English was good”. For some, English is no longer regarded as an adjunct to life but is integral and incorporated into life, as the following illustrates: “English does not just impact on our life. It has become a part of our life. So it’s hard to answer specifically” (PW 15).

These experiences reflect the transformation through experience as developed by Jarvis (2006), discussed previously in section 4.2 where learning gradually becomes integrated into the person’s life world resulting in a changed and more experienced person. In the case of language learning, it suggests that the learner’s proficiency

develops to the extent that it becomes assimilated into the person's life and considered a normal part of daily life, or "integrated into the person's individual biography" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 103).

#### **7.4.3 The NNSE functioning in roles of responsibility in an international organization experiences additional pressure from the language expectations of self and of others.**

Evident from the data were the challenges that continue for NNSE throughout the discourses in which they are involved and the roles that they fulfilled in the WCHO. This theme addresses the participant experiences within the discourses of *Moving On: the discourse of leadership* and *Global Networking: the discourse of an international organization*.

Leadership positions with the WCHO demand clear communication, tact and diplomacy all of which require well developed English language skills. Those with leadership responsibilities in the organization are required to function in many varied contexts and discourses utilising English, in addition to the contexts in which they utilise the local language of the COS and their own L1. There appeared to be two sources of concern: those that are extrinsic influences and those that are intrinsic influences. Extrinsic influences arising from the data are linked to intrinsic but are essentially due to the multicultural nature of the teams in which the NNSE functions. It was noted that utilising well developed English language skills does not guarantee communication as misunderstandings still occurred, and from the data this was attributed to cultural differences in English language use, individual interpretation, and misunderstanding of intentions. Having the requisite English language skills was considered by leaders themselves to be essential to fulfil their roles satisfactorily: "An ordinary member has no big responsibility which affects the many people in the team, but leaders are different. So, people in leadership are required to have good English" (PW 5).

The intrinsic factors emerging from that data that can create difficulty reflect the perception on the part of the NNSE that the standard of English that they have attained is inadequate to effectively perform the role or specific functions required by the responsibilities they hold. This is particularly pertinent to those fulfilling

leadership roles within the WCHO which require the NNSE to function in English in a wide range of contexts and discourses, all of which require advanced EL skills and all of which require context or discourse specific vocabulary. Those in leadership can feel unprepared for the diverse range of responsibilities they are required to assume and the range of English language skills required, as explained by PW10, as follows, “I think we felt unprepared for this in some ways in terms of language requirements.”

This is made more complex by the multicultural nature of the team and organization. Those NNSE functioning in leadership roles experience frustration at not being able to express themselves clearly and at times experience doubts about being understood in sensitive situations such as counselling. When a task requires a level of English that is beyond that of the NNSE, there is a perception that, to some extent, the respect of other team members is lost when the leader is unable to function efficiently to complete the task at the level required.

Contexts in which leaders may be involved in addition to those of the team member are as follows:

- communicating internationally with colleagues;
- formal contexts (speaking publically);
- business meetings;
- financial responsibilities;
- counselling;
- decision making;
- strategy development;
- conflict resolution; and
- administrative tasks.

These are presented in diagrammatically in Figure 9 (p. 178) with contexts using local language and the person’s L1 for comparison.



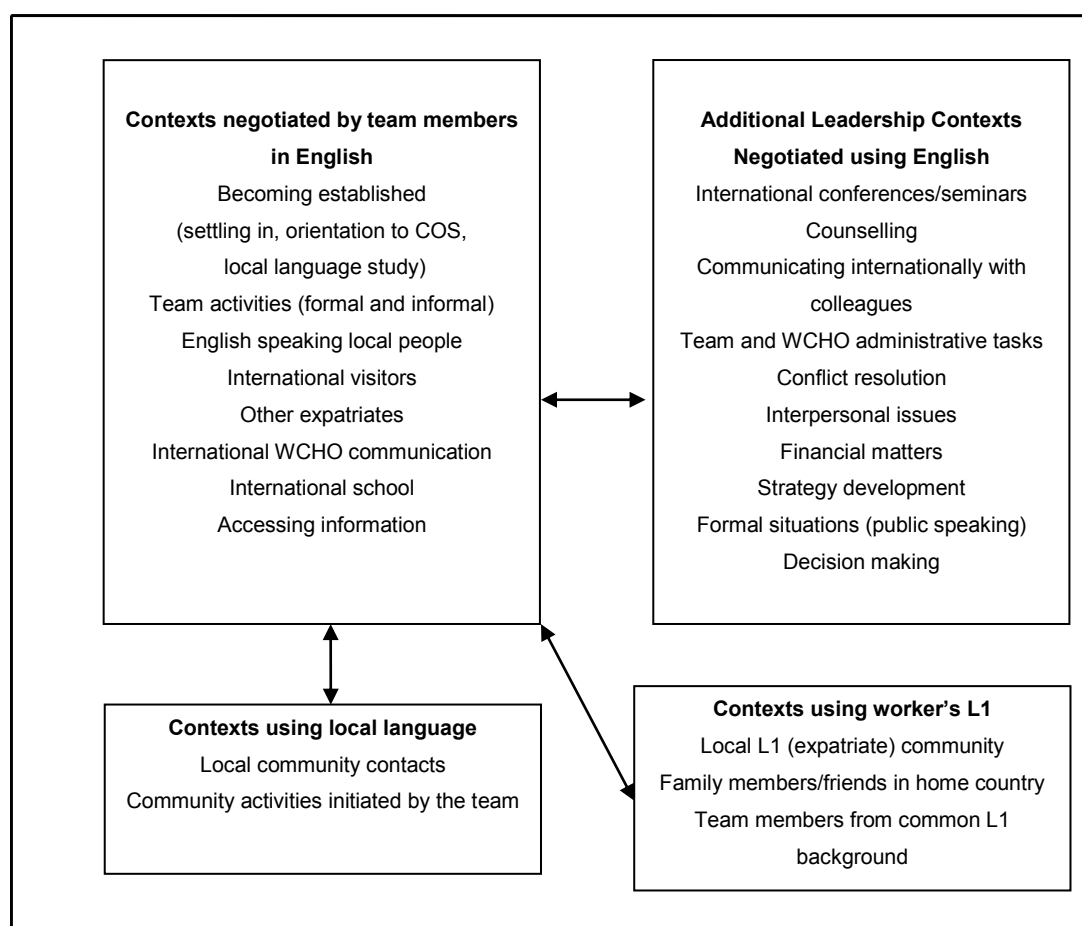


Figure 9. Possible contexts of L1, local language and English language use in the country of service.

#### 7.4.4 Learning English is a means of fulfilling vocation.

From the data it was clear that participants held a sense of vocation that was encompassed within their spiritual beliefs. Respondents expressed a sense of God-given *call* to work in another country; this was a perception that there was a particular purpose for their lives closely tied to their own spiritual beliefs and that this involved working in another country which necessitated learning English. This sense of vocation serves as a long term goal which the ELL frequently returns to so as to maintain their focus in times when they are experiencing difficulties or a sense of despondency. The decision to return to study ESL as adults was made in order to accomplish their overall purpose, and as such language study also becomes incorporated into their spirituality. This reflects the embodied nature of learning discussed in section 4.8; English language learning was integrated with their spirituality and sense of calling by a higher power for a higher purpose. This echoes

Ollis' (2008) description of embodied learning as embedded in everyday interactions with others and connected to the person as a whole.

This sense of vocation was the initial impetus for participants that set in motion a process undertaken to fulfil their purpose, the process included English language study. To fulfil their call, it was necessary to choose an organization through which this purpose could be accomplished, participants choosing the WCHO, as I 13 explains, "But when God called me to be a cross-cultural worker, I had to choose a specific agency, so I chose [the WCHO]" (I 13). The WCHO requires non-native speakers of English to achieve the minimum level of English stipulated before they can be considered to work with the organization, therefore necessitating some form of English language study. The rationale given by respondents for this requirement was that developing English language skills enables communication within the multicultural teams in which they would work, as the following explains:

We decided to become cross-cultural workers, and also decided to join the organization ... we must speak English for all our lives with team members, so learning English is a very important thing for our family. We willingly decided to come here to learn English. (I 14)

English is studied to achieve the required score, however, in addition, ELL is also considered a stage in the process required to fulfil their vocation with opportunities to learn more than just English itself. The opportunity to learn English was considered by participants as part of their spiritual "journey" to fulfil their vocation, as the following illustrates, "It was a pleasure to come here, because God knew our situation, and God led us to Australia and God gave me another chance to learn English and to learn another culture. It was a pleasure" (I 10). Studying in an inner circle country is perceived to present opportunities to develop spiritually through ELL and participants described the spiritual lessons learnt in the process.

Developing English language skills sufficiently to be able to perform spiritual practices using English, to be able to discuss spiritual matters in English and to teach others about their beliefs using English were expressed as goals of ELL. Being able to incorporate English into personal spiritual practices was considered an achievement, with praying aloud in English considered a significant achievement, a

type of milestone, particularly in a group context. It appears that feelings of embarrassment over their English language use caused people to hesitate to pray out loud in English in public, which would be a natural part of their spiritual practices in their L1, as PW 7 explains:

It took me a long time to have the courage to pray in English ... I found it very hard to pray aloud in a bigger prayer group. I held back so long that it nearly became an obsession, but finally I broke through the embarrassment and felt liberated. (PW 7)

For those already working in their COS, it was noted that being able to communicate well in English facilitates communication with others in the organization, enabling people to fulfil their vocation and that is “a blessing that no money could buy” (PW 9). This helps explain the reason for the commitment to learning and using English that the participants in the study demonstrated; English and ELL has an interconnectedness with their spirituality, sense of self and sense of calling as discussed in sections 4.7 and 4.8 earlier.

It seems from the data that the participants considered that fulfilling their sense of vocation necessitated learning and using English and as such it was not regarded as a burden or a hardship. Developing skills in English also enabled them to participate in the spiritual practices within the community of like-minded people. This also echoes Tisdell’s (2003) observation, from section 4.8, that spirituality brings with it a sense of collective responsibility, in this study proficiency in English enables the participants to fulfil this purpose through working with the WCHO. What emerges is the sense that the participants in this study feel a strong sense of emotional and spiritual commitment to their learning and that they are meant to be there, reflecting closely Ollis’ (2008) comments in section 4.8. This overarching sense of vocation infuses each of the five discourses; Training, Transitions, Belonging, Moving On and Global Networking. However, as has become evident throughout this results and discussion chapter, the role of English developed over time with participant experiences.

### **7.5 Significance of the Findings for ELT Pedagogy**

In the introduction to this study, it was stated that the researcher undertook this study to further develop pedagogic competence and that pedagogical concerns are also fundamental to hermeneutic phenomenology. From a consideration of the analysis of the themes arising from the data analysis and the literature surveyed it is possible to identify issues of significance to ELT practitioners that have emerged.

Although the ELT is responsible for the overt and practical elements of teaching that are recognised as essential to their role, there are wider issues that may not be so obvious initially and these were addressed in the literature review. The findings of this study concur with what is already generally accepted in the literature: that the importance of the role of the English language teacher in creating a positive learning experience cannot be underestimated. There are unique challenges to self and to identity that the second language classroom presents, further complicated by the additional demands of adjusting to a new cultural context when this learning takes place in another country.

Two aspects of language learning that can be addressed specifically by ELT are language anxiety and cultural adaptation. When learners know what to expect and can recognise the causes for the emotions and particularly anxieties that they may be experiencing, they can be better prepared to understand and to implement strategies to cope. Facilitating the setting of realistic personal goals and presenting opportunities to be involved in the social networks in the target language are beneficial for both developing confidence, language proficiency and overcome language anxiety, as discussed in section 2.1. However, these same strategies can facilitate cultural adjustment and the development of intercultural awareness and understanding. On the part of the WCHO, it would be of benefit for those undertaking formal language studies in one of the training centres to be furnished prior to arrival with information addressing some of the challenges that they will face so as to better prepare learners for what lies ahead.

Whether the teacher chooses to teach in a manner that directly facilitates transformative learning or not, an understanding of the transformative learning theory may be beneficial for recognising and supporting learners as they face

challenges to their perspectives, their frames of reference, that language learning and living in a new culture present and the demands this makes initially, both emotionally and physically, until the language learner and significant others become established in the new context. An English language teacher who is aware to some extent of the learner's socio-cultural context, including prior language learning experiences and family situation, and the potential for significant change that second language learning presents for adults can also be better prepared to support learners as they face the disruptions not only in terms of cognitive but affective and spiritual aspects of the person as well.

There is the possibility for English language teaching professionals to feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the issues involved with ELT, but recognising the potential to facilitate deep learning that can bring about positive outcomes for the learners with whom we work. Above all, creating a context for learning that addresses all aspects of the person in a respectful manner, where learners feel valued as equals, where self confidence is developed in an environment that is supportive, and where opportunities are presented to discuss in depth value laden content that is appropriate to the contexts of the learners, then learning can occur that is meaningful, has significance in the life of the learner and is applicable in life situations.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The completion of this chapter drawing results together in discussion with the literature proved to be a process of negotiation between the researcher, the literature and the texts at different levels throughout the process. Negotiation occurred between the researcher and the texts in making choices of what was significant and what was not, in seeking meaning within commonalities identified in the data, and in taking these towards concepts. In this process of negotiation, returning to the literature was invaluable in helping clarify issues for the researcher. As a beginner researcher, the negotiation between the different dimensions necessary to write this chapter was enabled through the support and reassurance gained from the writings of scholars who have contributed to the literature consulted.

A significant dimension initially for the researcher was dealing with the temptation, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe, to let the texts "speak for themselves"

(p. 130) in an effort to represent participant voices faithfully and in an authentic manner. After pondering this matter for some time, it was reassuring for the researcher to read Elliot's (2005) comments that provide some grounding in reality, in that through the research interview people are given the opportunity to "to provide an extended account of their life experiences" (p. 24) and that this is not a common occurrence. Elliot (2005) notes that because interviews are specific accounts provided for a specific purpose "they do not provide privileged access to peoples thoughts" (p. 24). To Elliot (2005) this implies that through the interview the participant does not produce pre-formed meanings but rather the interview itself provides the opportunity to make sense of the experiences, what Elliot describes as "an intrinsic part of the research process" (p. 24). The research process then becomes a "site for the production of knowledge" (p. 24) as the researcher negotiates meaning with the research text. Although similar concepts had been explored in section 5.6.2 with relation to similar comments by Freebody (2003) and Hatch (2002), this reiteration was reassuring for the researcher; a timely reminder.

### **7.7 Summary**

In this chapter the results of the analysis of data have been presented in four themes with their related sub-themes that were identified through employing grounded theory methods to consider the data, and from thematic analysis of the data. Drawing on these results in consultation with the literature reviewed in section 2 of the thesis, issues of significance for ELT practitioners were drawn. In the summary of the results and discussion chapter that follows, a brief recapitulation is presented.

The first theme addressed the transformation experienced by the English language learners and users who participated in this study. It is clear that the English language learning experiences of the participants prior to embarking on ELL as adults was of significance, for some contributing a positive foundation to later learning whereas for others negative early experiences contributed to the development of language anxiety and attitudes to language learning that are not helpful to later learning. Motivations for undertaking English language learning in another country and culture include the perception that the context will expedite acquisition as a result of the opportunities presented, even though the challenges faced are numerous.

Participants in the study related experiences of transformation in three general areas that correspond to the findings of other studies. Changes in attitudes and approaches to language learning were noted having experienced a different learning environment. These changes saw participants reflect on teaching and learning methods and develop their own strategies which they regarded as effective.

Transformation experienced incorporated changes to the self that were evident, including increased self-confidence when using English and in relating to others, and increased confidence in their ability to solve problems and cope in challenging circumstances. Changes to identity were also evident from analysis of the data, including conscious changes to facilitate language learning or to conscious reinvention. The development of a new or different “self” through the process of learning and using English in another country and culture was identified from the data. These changes were also noticeable to others. The development of intercultural understanding was also an aspect of transformation identified from the data. This included understanding of the host culture through the insights that the local language, in this case English, gave, but also an understanding of the vulnerability of people regardless of culture. The desire to form friendships across cultures was also a dimension of change that was evident.

The importance of contextual factors on the ELL process cannot be underestimated. From analysis of the data it appears that of major importance to those relocating to engage in a period of English language study is the significant disruption that relationships and daily routines undergo and this, coupled with the challenges of adjustment of the new culture and language, can be physically draining for the learner. Separation from family and friends brings with it some sense of loss of the deep level of relationships, despite efforts to maintain regular contact. Adjustments to the many changes require a reassessment of priorities, roles and responsibilities.

The significance of achieving the required test or exam result to proceed as planned was also a constant underlying source of stress to English language learners in this study. Fulfilment of organizational requirements was a priority as was the development of language skills to enable communication in English. This was regarded as essential to fulfil their sense of calling to work in international teams in

their COS. Both competence in communication and native speaker-like fluency were expressed as specific English language learning goals.

For those working in their COS the role of English becomes more established in their lives, perceived as integral not only to work but to life in general. Proficiency in English continues to develop in the COS over time, to a point where participants felt more comfortable using English and it becomes a “tool” to use to form relationships and become part of social and personal networks in the COS. However, there were certain contexts and situations in which respondents continue to feel anxious about their ability to communicate effectively.

An overarching motivation for learning and using English was a sense of vocation that was the initial impetus for beginning their journeys to join the organization and therefore the impetus to gain the required level of proficiency in English. As a result, participants were highly motivated to continue despite challenges faced in language learning and in stages of cultural adjustment. Once working in the COS, English language proficiency continues to develop. Participation in spiritual practices using English and spiritual lessons learnt through both the English language learning process and in using English in the COS were of significance.

Relating to others using a second or additional language engenders different emotions, often related to the perceived level of success of the encounter and dependent on elements of context, interlocutor and discourse. As proficiency increases, English language usage becomes integrated with other aspects of daily life. However, for some, experiences of language anxiety continue. From analysis of the data there appear to be tendencies to perceive both self and others in categories or groupings: native speakers, non-native speakers, English speakers and foreigners with explanation of these categories given in the chapter. There were perceived benefits from being a NNSE fulfilling roles of responsibility, including having understanding of the challenges faced by other NNSE within the organizational context and being able to play an advocacy role for NNSE.

At an organizational level, it appears that becoming established and functioning effectively as a member of multicultural teams, remaining informed of global



communication within the WCHO, accessing information and relating to international visitors to the COS requires proficiency in English. It also provides opportunities to access social networks with local people and with the expatriate community, including international schools, within the COS. However, with added responsibilities within the WCHO bring added demands and expectations in terms of English language proficiency. Contexts in which NNSE with leadership responsibilities are required to communicate are many and varied including international forums through to counselling individuals, all of which require high levels of proficiency and discourse specific vocabulary. For those who have the English proficiency required, this enables the fulfillment of these roles while those who do not have the level of proficiency required experience feelings of frustration, inadequacy, and unpreparedness for the complexity of the language required.

The reporting of results and the discussion associated drew to a close with a discussion of the significance of the findings for ELT. The importance of the role of English language teachers in formal ELL contexts was discussed, particularly in facilitating positive outcomes through addressing specific issues of cultural adaptation and language anxiety. The importance of the ELT understanding learners' sociocultural contexts was also highlighted as was the necessity for teachers to remain informed of issues affecting their learners so as to better support them through changes.

Chapter eight follows concluding the thesis by presenting the research objectives in relation to the results and discussion. This concluding chapter also presents the conclusion of the researcher's journey with this study.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusion

To draw this thesis to its conclusion this chapter will present the three the research objectives of this study examined in turn with reflections from analysis and interpretation of the data. Opportunities for further research that can be identified from this study are then identified before the thesis is concluded with a reflection on the researcher's experience of drawing this study together.

#### 8.1 Addressing the Research Objectives

##### *Examining the lived experiences of personnel within an international organization who use English as their second or additional language*

The group of people considered in this study could be described as unique as their experiences were different from those of other groups learning and using English and as such the data collected and conclusions drawn are different. They were not learning and using English to establish themselves in any one particular inner circle country, as is the case for migrants, and they are not returning to their home countries to further career options. Rather they were preparing to work in a third culture. Therefore, they were not trying to gain long term or permanent access to any social networks within the country in which they were studying, but rather looking to gain entry to the social networks within the organization and the teams in which they were working in the future.

Experiences of learning and using English within the WCHO have a temporal nature that is also context dependent. For NNSE within the organization the role of English develops as proficiency develops and the role of English within the family is negotiated as necessitated by the demands of changing contexts. NNSE working with the WCHO encounter numerous contexts and discourses in which English language proficiency is required. This places significant continuing demands on the NNSE, particularly for those in roles of responsibility.

Through the process of learning English, developing proficiency and in utilising English in their COS, those from a NNSE background are able to participate in the WCHO and fulfil roles of responsibility within the organization. This aligns with the

sense of calling and an overall sense of vocation that the participants indicated. However, it is of importance that the additional pressures that NNSE encounter while negotiating contexts in English is recognised. Additional stress is experienced both when working with the organization in their countries of service and when seeking to prepare to work with the WCHO through attaining the required English language levels. Additional measures can be taken to facilitate positive outcomes from the times of transition encountered by ELL and by NNSE within team and organisational contexts through preparation that is thorough and that meets the needs of NNSE as they take up different roles within the WCHO.

***Exploring the routine experiences of adult learners and users of English as a second or additional language***

The experiences of adult second language learners and practitioners are uniquely individual but there are commonalities in their experiences as revealed in the results gained in this study. In the routine daily experiences of learning and using English enhanced by experiences in a cross-cultural or multicultural context, participants experienced transformation that had a deep impact on them as people, facilitating changes in their attitudes and to their identities and sense of self. Their language learning and using experiences were interwoven with meaning making or individuation processes.

It was due to a sense of vocation that participants returned to ELL as adults and this sense of vocation that motivated and sustained them to persist through challenges, eventually seeing fulfillment when opportunities were presented to them in their COS to participate in social networks in English. The participants in this study appeared to embrace the challenges of ELL rather than regard their learning as a means to an end, investing their time, energy and financial resources to achieve the required level of proficiency, but also to achieve their own personal goals. Both the immediate and the wider family are affected by this and this requires negotiation of roles and relationships as contexts vary. English itself takes a role within the family that alters when contexts alter and as demands require. The place of English within the family is also negotiated at different stages of the experience of the participants, with the suggestion that the use of English can become, for some, integrated into their lives and employed in a utilitarian manner.

***Considering the significance of the findings for TESOL pedagogy***

For the English language teacher, the opportunities exist to contribute to the experience of learners in a positive manner through awareness of the complex issues that are involved in the English language learning process, the additional demands placed on the adult learner by a new cultural context and the demands that are placed upon those ELL studying English in another country specifically in preparation to work for the WCHO. Understanding, to some extent, the wider context of each learner including the nature of previous English language learning experiences and family situation, can contribute to the development of teaching practice that aligns with learner needs and goals and achieves the learning outcomes required while developing sensitivity to the unique challenges encountered by each individual learner.

Second language learning can be a profoundly unsettling process and it is clear from consideration of the data with the extant research that when this is combined with relocation to another country and culture there are additional layers of complexity involved. Changes in the cultural context can be a major stressor so facilitating adjustment and establishment of routines in the new context progresses language learning leaves the learner free to concentrate on the higher order processes required to learn another language. Of importance for the WCHO is the provision of comprehensive information for those preparing to study overseas on issues that they and their family members will encounter and of ways these can successfully be negotiated.

The role of the English language teacher in formal learning contexts cannot be underestimated and what is apparent in the classroom context belies the complexity of the experience. Teachers are a major influence in the experience of adult language learners in many ways, whether through facilitating transformative learning, informing learners of aspects of culture shock and assisting learners with cultural adjustment, or in helping learners avoid or overcome language anxiety, all of which are in addition to providing quality language learning experiences. Of particular importance to the researcher was King's (2000) comment that, to learners, the person of the teacher is not separated from the role of teacher; it appears that both learner and teacher share a joint investment in the language learning process.

The regard for context in adult learning in general and in adult second language learning in particular has been highlighted, with the particular importance of learner access to, and participation in, social and peer networks, not just for language learning purposes but for facilitating cultural adjustment and acculturation, acknowledged.

## **8.2 Possibilities for Further Research**

The results of this study would indicate that the methodology chosen to both collect and analyse the data produced sufficient quality and quantity of data to achieve the three research objectives, however possibilities for further research have been identified as follows:

- Responses from the interview process at level two were from one WCHO training centre. Eliciting responses from people studying English at one of the other training facilities operated by the WCHO may provide an additional dimension.
- Exploring the specific factors that contribute to transformative learning experiences when adults engage in learning English is also an area that researchers are actively exploring. Further investigation of this area would enable English language teachers to better understand the experiences of their learners.
- On an organizational level, it may be considered worthwhile to interview on a wider scale, interviewing and observing people in their work context, in team functions in their countries of service and their international interactions which employ English. The discourse specific language required within the WCHO could then be identified and resources made available to more effectively prepare and equip NNSE for integration into roles of responsibility that demand advanced English language skills. It would perhaps assist the organization in deciding what the desirable outcomes are for those NNSE in the WCHO.

- In terms of organizational practice, ongoing investigation into the integration of new workers whether from NNSE background or NSE background would be beneficial for ongoing discussion and consideration within the WCHO.
- An aspect that is integral to the experiences shared by the participants in this study was that of the family context. This area appears to be of major significance in the language learner experience. In terms of organisational praxis research into the specific challenges faced by families and the coping strategies utilised may be of benefit to the WCHO, particularly with the unique nature of the organisational experience.

### **8.3 Reflecting on the Research Experience**

The researcher has chosen to write this section at times using first person, reflecting the centrality of the person in this study and the influence of phenomenology, where the use of first person is a “signification of a dual ontological kind: people first in the research and researcher as „person first’ in writing about people in research” (Murray & Lawrence, 2000, p. 127). The use of third person for this section when describing my own personal experience seemed clumsy and contrived.

The metaphor of the journey has frequently been used to describe the nature of the research experience and is one that sits well with the researcher as the thesis has taken her to “places” in the literature that were not anticipated. Throughout the journey that has been the writing this thesis, the researcher has identified convergences between multiple strands that are apparent in the thesis: the strands of adult learning, issues of cultural, transformative learning, adult language learning and vocation. It has been somewhat revelatory to find these seemingly disparate elements coming together in confluence in the lives of the participants. What began as an apparently straightforward study became more complex, interwoven and connected, reflecting dimensions that were crucial to the nature of the experiences shared with reader and researcher. It should not have been surprising: the lives of adults are complex, language learning is complex and moving cultures is fraught with complexity.

The rightness of the decision to establish this study in hermeneutic phenomenology is one that the researcher has continued to be convinced of, as it has enabled the

investigation to cope with the complexity of the everyday. In dealing with this complexity, van Manen (1997) comments as follows:

To do hermeneutic phenomenology is to attempt to accomplish the impossible: to construct a full interpretive description, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal... complete reduction is impossible ...full or final descriptions are unattainable. (p. 18)

Yet van Manen (1997) explains that this does not mean we give up, but rather pursue interpretive description with more vigour. What has been presented in this thesis is but one interpretation of the responses of participants in this study, much remains that could be drawn from the data as participants shared their experiences so generously with me. The interview process proved to be one of making sense or making meaning from the experiences together, both researcher and participant as discussed earlier in section 7.6. Of value too, were the contributions of those who responded with written texts. Van Manen (1997) observes that most people prefer to talk rather than write and do so with more ease and it is generally accepted this is particularly so for people using a language other than their L1. There are linguistic demands in the writing process that are less intense in the spoken exchange and, for this reason, it was greatly pleasing to discover the depth of responses to the guiding questions from participants at level one, protocol writing.

As researcher and teacher, this journey has facilitated personal growth and change and these changes have included the development of skills, reflection on personal attitudes and a strengthening of personal conviction. Through developing new skills in the use of technology the researcher has become more confident in her own capabilities and has been able to apply new skills in other areas of life. This has involved negotiating a series of challenges to use technologies that were new, such as recording and converting audio files, using voice recognition software to create written texts from audio files, utilising a data analysis program, and formatting this large document without the help of others. These technological challenges once overcome have added to the repertoire of skills and resources available to call upon in other situations.

Personal change has also included changes to attitudes. As an English language teacher, my respect has increased for those who undertake ELL as adults, knowing that it is likely to remain a commitment for the entirety of their professional lives. As researcher, my appreciation for the significance of what is considered the everyday has also been heightened, as, on closer inspection, the research process has also sensitised the researcher to the issues that may normally be accepted or considered ordinary. Van Manen (1997) claims that hermeneutic phenomenology “encourages a certain attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions of our everyday educational lives. It makes us thoroughly aware of the consequential in the inconsequential, the significant in the taken-for-granted” (p. 8). The challenge was to remain oriented to the phenomenon being studied and I am satisfied that this has been accomplished through returning to the data and to the literature while the thesis has remained practical and applicable.

Having had opportunities to share a number of the discoveries made during this study with colleagues, I have developed greater confidence in what I have discovered, but also my convictions that learning as an adult can be significant and that the experience of learning English can be one that enhances the process of individuation, have been strengthened. However, having come to the end of this thesis and this research journey, I have become even more aware that questions will continue to unfold and that puzzles still remain.

This research journey has also been a series of encounters. Encounters with the literature have also been of significance for the researcher as the writings of those more experienced have been invaluable in maintaining clarity but also in taking the study to areas that were not at first envisaged and stretching me beyond the “edges of my knowing”. There have been moments of revelation when the literature connects with what is being discovered in the study and these moments have been quite profound. Encounters with the participants have permeated the study as their stories were returned to repeatedly. In a very real sense, our stories have been nested (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), just as our lived experience has been entwined: I have found myself identifying with the participants as teacher, as parent, as language learner. As an English language teacher, the study has confirmed for me that opportunities are presented to shape learning experiences with the prospect that



encounters can be of consequence. As learners and teacher, as researcher and participants, we seem to have encountered each other at pivotal times in our lives and I remain enlivened by the encounters. One cannot easily emerge from encounters such as these unchanged in some way and this is as it should be. Our experiences having been entwined however briefly seem to be significant for us all. Perhaps we recognize that “one’s own experiences are the possible experiences of others and also that the experiences of others are the possible experiences of oneself” (van Manen, 1997, p. 58).

As contexts and learners change, I continue to be animated by the question, “What is it like?” As the study has progressed I find that I have developed awareness of the depth of meaning that seemingly ordinary experiences can have and I find myself genuinely wanting to know “what is it like?” It is a question that enables us to look closely at, and to be sensitive to, the experiences of others, leading conversations and therefore relationships to a deeper level; a powerful question. Van Manen (1997) draws our attention to this by asking, “Aren’t the most captivating stories exactly those which help us to understand better what is most common, most taken-for-granted, and what concerns us most ordinarily and directly?” (p. 19). I continue to be captivated by the unique stories of the learners with whom I work.

## References

- Apte, J. (2009). Facilitating transformative learning: A framework for practice. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 49(1), 169-189.
- Audacity Team. (2007-2008). Audacity Cross-platform Sound Editor (Version 1.3.4) [Computer program]. Information available: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>
- Bailey, K.C. (1998). Approaches to empirical research in TESOL. *TESOL Matters*, 8(6). Retrieved from <http://www.tesol.org/assoc/prez/1998/pm9812.html>
- Barnacle, R. (2001). *Phenomenology and survey analysis*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Fremantle, 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.aare.edu.au/01pap/bar01601.htm>
- Bennet, A., & Bennet, D. (2007). The knowledge and knowing of spiritual learning. *VINE: The Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*, 37(2), 150-168.
- Bilton, T., Bonnett, K., Jones, P., Lawson, T., Skinner, D., Stanworth, M., & Webster, A. (2002). *Introductory sociology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Basingstoke, UK: Pelgrave, Macmillan.
- Block, D. (2004). Globalization and language teaching. *ELT Journal*, 58(1), 75-77. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Boeree, C.G. (1998). Qualitative methods workbook: Part one, Shippensburg University. Retrieved from [www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/qualmethone.html](http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/qualmethone.html)
- Boyatzis, R. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Boyer, K.K., Olsen, J.R., & Jackson, E.C. (2001). Electronic surveys: Advantages and disadvantages over traditional print surveys. *Decision Line*. July, 4-7. Michigan State University, MI. doi:1.1.1.123.2909[1].pdf
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, 77-101. Retrieved from [www.QualResearchPsych.com](http://www.QualResearchPsych.com)
- Brookfield, S. (1995). *Adult learning: An overview*. Faculty papers, National-Louis University. Retrieved from [www.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/facultypapers/StephenBrookfield\\_AdultLearning.cfm](http://www.nl.edu/academics/cas/ace/facultypapers/StephenBrookfield_AdultLearning.cfm)

- Brown, H.D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Longman.
- Brown, J. (2003). *The self-defining other – ESL teachers talk about their students*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Auckland. AARE BR003603.
- Brown, J., & Rodgers, T. (2002). *Doing second language research*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Burch, R. (2006). Phenomenology, lived experience: Taking a measure of the topic. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, 8, 130-160. Retrieved from [www.phenomenologyonline.com/articles/burch2.html](http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/articles/burch2.html)
- Burns, R. (1994). *Introduction to research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Melbourne, VIC: Longman.
- Burns, R. (1995). *The adult learner at work*. Warriewood, NSW: Business and Professional.
- C.C.I.T. (The Center for Computing and Information Technology, University of Arizona). (2003). *Email attachment tips*. Retrieved from <http://web.arizona.edu/~consult/email-attach.html>
- Cerbone, D.R. (2006). *Understanding phenomenology*. Chesham, Bucks: Acumen.
- Chang, B-M. (2008). English acquisition through NNS-NNS interaction in EFL context: Focused on the distance learning between Japan and Korea. *English Language and Literature Teaching*, 13(2).
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London, England: Sage.
- Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, M.C., & Caffarella, R.S. (1999). Theorizing adult development. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 84, 3-8.
- Clark, T. (2005). Lifelong, life-wide or life sentence? *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 45(1), 47-62.
- Cook, V. (n.d.). The goals of ELT: Reproducing native-speakers or promoting multi-competence among second language users? *Goals of English language Teaching by Vivian Cook*. Retrieved from [privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~vcook/OBS30.htm](http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~vcook/OBS30.htm)

- Corbin, J., & Holt, N. (2005). Grounded theory. In B. Somekh, & C. Lewin (Eds.). *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 49-55). London, England: Sage.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (1996). Putting multiliteracies to the test. *Education Australia Online*. Retrieved from <http://edoz.com.au/educationaustralia/archive/features/multi.html>
- Courtney, B., Merriam, S., & Reeves, P. (1998). The centrality of meaning-making in transformational learning: How HIV-positive adults make sense of their lives. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48, (2), 65-84.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- De Vita, G., & Smallbone, T. (n.d). *Pedagogic research and ethics: Some pointers for pedagogic researchers*. Retrieved from [www.brookes.ac.uk/publications/bejlt/volume1issue2/practice/devita\\_smallbone.pdf](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/publications/bejlt/volume1issue2/practice/devita_smallbone.pdf)
- Dei, G.J.S. (2002). Spiritual knowing and transformative learning, Working paper #59. *National research network for new approaches to lifelong learning (NALL)*. Toronto, ON. Retrieved from <http://www.nall.ca/res/59GeorgeDei.pdf>
- Dirkx, J.M. (2001). Images, transformative learning and the work of the soul. *Adult Learning*, 12(3), 15-16.
- Economist. (2001). The triumph of English: A world empire by other means. *The Economist Newspaper Dec 20*. Retrieved from [http://www.economist.com/node/883997?story\\_id=E1\\_RRPJJS](http://www.economist.com/node/883997?story_id=E1_RRPJJS)
- Edwards, R., Biesta, G., & Thorpe, M. (2009). *Rethinking contexts for learning and teaching: Communities, Activities and Networks*. Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Elliot, J. (2005). *Using narrative in social research*. London, England: Sage.
- Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Embree, L. (1997). What is phenomenology? *Centre for advanced research in phenomenology*. Retrieved from [www.phenomenologycentre.org/phenom.htm](http://www.phenomenologycentre.org/phenom.htm)

- Fenimore, M.A. (1997). The grammar of self in second and other language learning. *The International Journal of Language, Culture and Society*, 1, 1-11.  
Retrieved from <http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/users/tle/JOURNAL>
- Fenton, A. (2006). WEFT QDA. Qualitative data analysis. (Version 1.0.1)  
[Software] Available from <http://www.pressure.to/qda/>
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80-92.
- Field, J. (2006). *Lifelong learning and the new educational order* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire: Trentham.
- Fraser, H. (1999). ESL pronunciation teaching: Could it be more effective? *Australian Language Matters*, 7(4), 7-8.
- Foley, G. (Ed.). (2004). *Dimensions of adult learning*. Crows Nest, New South Wales: Allen and Unwin.
- Foster, E. (1997). Transformative learning in adult second language learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 33-40.
- Freebody, P. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: Interaction and practice*. London, England: Sage.
- Furnham, A. (2005). *The psychology of behaviour at work: The individual in the organization* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Hove, England: Psychology Press.
- Gadamer, H.G. (1975). *Truth and method* (G. Barden, & J. Cumming, trans.) London, England: Sheed & Ward. (Original work published 1960).
- Gelven, M. (1989). *A commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time* (rev. ed.). Illinois, IL: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Glicken, M.D. (2003). *Social research: A simple guide*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Globalisation Guide. (2002). How does globalisation affect culture? Is it Americanisation? *Australian Apec Study Centre*, Monash University, Melbourne. Retrieved from [www.globalisationguide.org](http://www.globalisationguide.org)
- Gonczi, A. (2004). The new professional and vocational education. In G. Foley (Ed), *Dimensions of adult learning* (pp. 19-34). Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin.
- Goulah, J. (2006). Transformative second and foreign language learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 3 (4), 201-221.

- Graddol, D. (1997). The future of English? *The British Council Digital Edition*. Retrieved from [www.britishcouncil.org/english/pdf/future.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/english/pdf/future.pdf)
- Guirdham, M. (1999). *Communicating across cultures*. Hampshire, England: Palgrave.
- Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Geelong, VIC: Deakin University Press.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. London, England: Edward Arnold.
- Hardy, T. (2004). Teaching English as an international language: Cultural issues. *Teaching English Now* 4, 21. Retrieved from [http://tb.sanseido.co.jp/english/newcrown/pdf/ten004/04\\_08.pdf](http://tb.sanseido.co.jp/english/newcrown/pdf/ten004/04_08.pdf)
- Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie, & E. Robinson, trans.). Oxford, England: Blackwell (original work published 1926).
- Hu, X. (2008). The culture shock that Asian students experience in immersion education. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, 15(1), 101-105. DOI: 10.1080/13586840701825378
- International Office, (2002). *United we serve*. Bucks, England: WEC.
- International Office. (2005). *Principles and practice*. Bucks, England: International Office.
- International Office. (2006). *Intercon 2006 report*. Bucks, England: International Office.
- International Office. (2007). *Communications directory*. Bucks, England: International Office.
- International Office. (2008). *Conference of the coordinating council: Devotions, recommendations, reports*. Bucks, England: International Office
- Internal Organization Magazine. (2007a). February-March. Bucks, England: International Office.
- Internal Organization Magazine. (2007b). April-May. Bucks, England: International Office.
- Jarvis, P. (2004). *Adult education and lifelong learning: Theory and practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London, England: Routledge/Falmer Press.

- Jarvis, P. (2006). *Towards a comprehensive theory of human learning*. London, England: Routledge/Falmer Press.
- Jenkins, J. (n.d.). Global English and the teaching of pronunciation. *Teaching English. British Council*. Retrieved from [www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/pron/global\\_english.shtml](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/pron/global_english.shtml)
- Kang, D. J. (2007). Rhizoactivity: Toward a postmodern theory of lifelong learning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 57(3), 205-220.
- Karagiorgi, Y., Kalogirou, C., Theodosiou, V., Theophaneous, M., & Kendeou, P. (2008). Underpinnings of adult learning in formal teacher professional development in Cyprus. *Journal of In-Service Education*, 34(2), 125-146.
- Keys, K., & Walker, R. (2002). Ten questions on the phonology of English as an international language. *ELT Journal Volume 56 (3)*, 298-302. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Khadar, B.A. (2006). Language learning and the definition of one's social, cultural, and racial identity. *TESOL Quarterly* 40(3), 628-639.
- King, K.P. (2000). The adult ESL experience: Facilitating perspective transformation in the classroom. *Adult Basic Education* 10(2), 69-89.
- Knowles, M., Holton, E., & Swanson, R. (2005). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Burlington, Massachusetts: Elsevier
- Knowles, M. (1990). *The adult learner: A neglected species*. Houston, TX: Gulf.
- Korab-Karpowicz, W. J. (2006). Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). *The Internet encyclopedia of philosophy*. Retrieved from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/h/heidegge.htm>
- Kovan, J., & Dirkx, J.M. (2003). "Being called awake": The role of transformative learning in the lives of environmental activists. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53(2), 99-118.
- Kovan, J. (2001). *Sustaining passion: The experience of being an environmentalist in a small nonprofit organization*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). Michigan State University, Michigan.
- Koven, M.E. (1998). Two languages in the self/ The self in two languages: French-Portuguese bilinguals' verbal enactments and experiences of self in narrative discourse. *Ethos*, 26 (4) 410-455. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/640663](http://www.jstor.org/stable/640663)

- Kuhl, D. (1996). *Internationalization of an interdenominational faith mission: How acceptable and effective are multicultural teams in WEC International?* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Columbia International University, Columbia, SC.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, A. (2005). When is a text? In T. Lê (Ed.), *Critical discourse analysis: Theory into research: Proceedings of the international conference* (pp. 350-360). Launceston, Tasmania: University of Tasmania.
- Lifelong Learning Council Queensland. (2008). *What is lifelong learning?* Retrieved from [www.llcq.org/01\\_cms/details.asp?ID=12](http://www.llcq.org/01_cms/details.asp?ID=12)
- List, D. (2003). Know your audience: chapter 15, part A. Internet audience research. *Audience dialogue*. Retrieved from [www.audiencedialogue.org/kya15a.html](http://www.audiencedialogue.org/kya15a.html)
- Lotherington, H. (2004). Review: Teaching English as an international language by S.L. McKay. *ELT Journal Volume 58*(1), 78-80. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- McBride, R., & Schostak, J. (1995). Research issues. *Enquiry Learning Unit, Institute of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University*. Retrieved from [www.uea.ac.uk/care/elu/Issues/Research/Res1Ch2.html](http://www.uea.ac.uk/care/elu/Issues/Research/Res1Ch2.html)
- McKay, S. (2003a). Teaching English as an international language: The Chilean context. *ELT Journal 57* (2), 139-148. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- McKay, S. (2003b). The cultural basis of teaching English as an international language. *TESOL Matters 13*(4), 1-4.
- McKay, S. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- McManes Holroyd, A.E. (2008). Interpretive hermeneutic phenomenology: Clarifying understanding. *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 7(2), 1-12. Retrieved from [www.ipjp.org](http://www.ipjp.org)
- Macedo, A.R. (2001). *Sociolinguistics*. Birmingham, England: University of Birmingham.



- MacKenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research, 16*. Retrieved from [www.iier.org.au/iier16/mackenzie.html](http://www.iier.org.au/iier16/mackenzie.html)
- Malpas, J. (2005). Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, E.N. Zalta (Ed.), Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2005/entries/gadamer/>
- Merriam, S.B., & Caffarella, R.S. (1999). *Learning in adulthood*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S.B., Caffarella, R.S., & Baumgartner, L.M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Mezirow, J. & Associates. (2000). *Learning as transformation*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J., Taylor, E., & Associates (Eds.). (2009). *Transformative learning in practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, J., Bonner, A., & Francis, K. (2006). The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5*(1), 25-35.
- Modiano, M. (2001). Linguistic imperialism, cultural integrity, and EIL. *ELT Journal Volume 55*(4), 339-347. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Moran, D. (2005). *Edmund Husserl: Founder of phenomenology*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.
- Morse, J., Stern, P., Corbin, J., Bowers, B., Charmaz, K., & Clarke, A. (2009). *Developing grounded theory: The second generation*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Murray, L., & Lawrence, B. (2000). *Practitioner-based enquiry*. London, England: Falmer Press.
- Neill, J. (2004). *Qualitative versus quantitative research: Key points in a classic debate*. Retrieved July 7, 2011 from <http://wilderdom.com/research/QualitativeVersusQuantitativeResearch.html>
- Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2001). Changing perspectives on good language learners. *TESOL Quarterly 35*(2), 307-322.
- Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(1) 9-31.
- Nuance Communications. (2006). Dragon Naturally Speaking. (Version 9) [computer software]. Burlington, MA: Nuance.

- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4).
- O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London, England: Sage.
- Ollis, T. (2008). The „accidental activist’: learning, embodiment and action. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 48(2), 316-335.
- Pakir, A. (1999). Connecting with English in the context of internationalisation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(1), 103-114.
- Paterson, M., & Higgs, J. (2005). Using hermeneutics as a qualitative research approach in professional practice, *The Qualitative Report*, 10(2), 339-357. Retrieved from [www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR10-2/paterson.pdf](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR10-2/paterson.pdf)
- Pepper, C., & Wildy, H. (2009). Using narratives as a research strategy. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 18-26.
- Punch, K. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. London, England: Sage.
- Punch, K. (1998). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London, England: Sage.
- Raley, R. (1997). *What is global English?* University of California. Retrieved from [www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/rraley/research/global-English.html](http://www.english.ucsb.edu/faculty/rraley/research/global-English.html)
- Rajagopalan, K. (2004). The concept of „World English’ and its implications for ELT. *ELT Journal*, 58(2), 111-117. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Reischmann, J. (2004). *Andragogy. history, meaning, context, function*. Retrieved February 10, 2011 from <http://www.andragogy.net>
- Savicevic, D. (2008). Convergence or divergence of ideas on andragogy in different countries [Electronic version]. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 27(4), 361 – 378.
- Schonlau, M., Fricker, R.D., & Elliot, M.N. (2002). *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Rand Corporation. Retrieved from [www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1480](http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1480)
- Schweitzer, R. (2002). *Indo-pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 2 (2) [Editorial].
- Sharon, M., Jasinski, M., & Weatherley, R. (2006). *Life based learning: A strength based approach to capability development*. NSW, Australia: TAFE NSW ICVET, NSW Department of Education and Training.

- Shin, U. (1996). Teaching literature for ethical intelligence and ethical responsibility. *Proceedings of the Conference in Values in Higher Education*, (pp. 1-11). Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee.
- Smith, D.W. (2009). Phenomenology. *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. E.N. Zalta (ed.). *What is phenomenology?* Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/phenomenology/>
- Somekh, B., & Lewin, C. (Eds.) (2005). *Research methods in the social sciences*. London, England: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Storti, C. (2001). *The art of crossing cultures* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London, England: Nicholas Brealey.
- Sussman, N.M. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet, *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4(4), 355-373. doi: 10.1207/S15327957PSPR0404\_5
- Tacey, D. (2011, June 10). *The morning interview with Margaret Throsby*. Sydney, NSW: ABC.
- Tam, C.O. (2008). Understanding the inarticulateness of museum visitors' experience of paintings: A phenomenological study of adult non-art specialists. *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 8(2), 1-11. Retrieved from [www.ipjp.org](http://www.ipjp.org)
- Tanveer, M. (2007). *Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Glasgow, Glasgow. UK.
- Taylor, E.W. (2008). Transformative learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 119, 5-15.
- Taylor, E.W. (2009). Fostering transformative learning. In J.Mezeriw, E.W. Taylor & Associates (Eds.), *Transformative learning in practice*, (pp. 3-17). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Taylor, K., Marineau, C., & Fiddler, M. (2000). *Developing adult learners*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Tennant, M. (1997). *Psychology and adult learning* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). London, England: Routledge.
- Tennant, M., & Pogson, P. (2002). *Learning and change in the adult years*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley.
- Thornbury, S. (2006). *An A-Z of ELT*. Oxford, England: Macmillan.
- Timmis, I. (2002). Native-speaker norms and international English: A classroom view. *ELT Journal*, 56(3), 240-249. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Tisdell, E.J. (2003). *Exploring spirituality and culture in adult and higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Tisdell, E.J., & Tolliver, D.E. (2001). The role of spirituality in culturally relevant and transformative adult education. *Adult Learning*, 12 (3), 13-14.
- Tsui, A. B. M. (1996). Reticence and anxiety in second language learning. In K.M. Bailey & D. Nunan, *Voices from the language classroom* (pp. 165-167). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Van der Mescht, H. (2004). Phenomenology in education: a case study in educational leadership. *The Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 4(1), 1-16. Retrieved from [www.ipjp.org](http://www.ipjp.org)
- Van Krieken, R. (Ed.). (2006). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson.
- van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.
- Walling, S.M., Erikson, C.B., Meese, K.J., Ciovica, A., & Gorton, D. (2006). Cultural identity and reentry in short-term student missionaries. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 34(2). Biola, CA: Biola University.
- WEC International. (2004). *Communications directory 2005-2006*. Bucks, England: International Office, WEC International.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University.
- Wetherell, M. (2001). Themes in discourse research. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S.J. Yates, *Discourse theory and practice*, (pp. 14-28). London, England: Sage.

- Willans, J., & Seary, K. (2007). "I'm not stupid after all": Changing perceptions of self as a tool for transformation. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 47(3), 433-452.
- Yun, G.W., & Trumbo, C.W. (2000). Computer response to a survey executed by post, e-mail & web form. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 6(1). Retrieved from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issues1/yun.html>
- Zhou, Y., Jindal-Snape, D., Topping, K., & Todman, J. (2008). Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 33(1), 63-75.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A Information Sheet**

Faculty of Education  
Locked Bag 1307  
Launceston  
Tasmania Australia 7250  
Telephone (03) 6324 3265  
Facsimile (03) 6324 3048  
smreszke@utas.edu.au

#### **Information Sheet**

Date: 1 March 2006

“Training and Transitions: The lived experiences of adult speakers of English as a second (or other) language”.

Chief Investigator: Dr Thao Lê	Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania.
Investigator: Suzanne Reszke	Graduate Research Student University of Tasmania.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.**

Dear Colleague,

We would like to invite your participation in a research project being undertaken by Suzanne Reszke as part of studies with the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, Australia.

#### **What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this study is to better understand the English language learning and using experiences of personnel working within our organization, who do not consider English their first language. We would like to gather your experiences of using English, whether during your training, working in multi-national teams, or in

leadership roles. We are interested in your reflections on your daily experiences learning and using English. To do this, you are invited to take part in one, two or all activities; you can choose the level of your involvement.

**Why should I take part in the study?**

We value your input as it is hoped that results of the study will help us deepen our understanding of your unique experiences as a learner and user of English. We want to better understand your experiences of studying English; your experiences of using English within your multi-national team; your experiences of using English as a leader in our organization; and your family's experiences learning and using English. Benefits to you from personal reflection on your experiences may include an increased awareness and insight.

There will be no financial compensation for participation in this study.

**Why have I been chosen to be in this study?**

You have been chosen as one of the 861 personnel, working with our organisation, from countries where English is not the official national language and, as such, it has been assumed that English is not your mother tongue.

**What do I need to do?**

Complete the attached **Consent Form**, including your email address for further correspondence, and return it to Suzanne Reszke via email: [smreszke@utas.edu.au](mailto:smreszke@utas.edu.au) or by post:

Suzanne Reszke c/- Dr Thao Lê  
Faculty of Education  
University of Tasmania  
Locked Bag 1307 Launceston  
Tasmania Australia 7250

You will be invited to participate in any, or all, of the following activities:  
write down your own experiences generally or write down your own anecdotes that.  
A list of guiding open-ended questions will be provided.

take part in an interview. You will be invited to describe your experiences of living in new countries, and operating in new language environments while using English as a team language.

**Are there any risks or discomforts to me?**

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts for participants in this study. However, although questions will be written with the utmost care and pre-tested, it is possible that some participants may feel uncomfortable recalling their experiences.

Participation in the study is voluntary; you may withdraw at any time without effect or explanation, and may withdraw any data you have supplied to date. You can choose the questions you answer.

**Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

Personal details, such as your name, nationality, and age, are not required for this study; no personally identifiable information will be published. Your responses will be coded so that they remain confidential to the degree permitted by the technology used.

During the research process, all digital data collected will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked room, hard copies and recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet. Following publication, data will be stored for five years at the Faculty of Education, Newnham Campus, University of Tasmania, Australia, after which documents will be shredded and recordings incinerated.

**Who do I need to contact if I have any questions about the research?**

If you have any questions, please contact:

Suzanne Reszke [smreszke@utas.edu.au](mailto:smreszke@utas.edu.au) Telephone: (61 3) 6337 0456  
or (61 3) 6337 0413

Dr Thao Lê      [T.Le@utas.edu.au](mailto:T.Le@utas.edu.au)      Telephone: (61 3) 63243696  
Fax: (61 3) 63243048

The project has received ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network which is constituted under the National Health &



Medical Research Council. The Committees under the HREC (Tasmania) Network use the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* Guidelines to inform their decisions.

If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted, please contact:

Amanda McAully (61 3) 6226 2763

Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network.

---

Chief Investigator

---

Investigator

**After reading this information sheet, please take time to complete the Consent Form, including your email address, and return it to the address provided above.**

**Thank you. Your input is valuable to us, and will help build understanding of your experiences.**

## **Appendix B**

### **Consent Form**

**Title of Project: “Training and Transitions: The lived experiences of adult speakers of English as a second (or other) language”.**

---

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves the following procedures: sharing my experiences, of living in a new country and a new language environment while using English, by participating in one, or any, or all of the following activities:
  - writing my experiences of learning and using English following a list of guiding open-ended questions, or recounting interesting incidents in my experiences
  - taking part in an interview
4. I understand that the following risks are involved:

There are no foreseeable risks involved for participants in this study.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for at least five years, and will be destroyed when no longer required.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
8. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that any information I supply to the researchers will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and if I so wish, may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research

Name of Participant:

---

Signature:

Date:

---

Participant email address:

Statement by Investigator

☐

I have explained this project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐

The participant has received the Information Sheet in which my details have been provided so that participants have had opportunity to contact me prior to them consenting to participate in this project.

Name of investigator: Suzanne Reszke

Signature of investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Guiding Questions: Protocol Writing

#### General Instructions

Focus on specific examples, incidents, or experiences, and describe what happened.

As you are thinking about your experience, describe what happened as you lived through it.

You *don't need* to explain the cause of the experience or interpret it (you don't need to say why things happened), and you don't need to generalize. Write as you normally write, you *don't need* to write elaborate phrases.

Describe the experience as you felt it, the way things around you looked and sounded.

The following are „guiding’ questions only. Answer any, or all, of the questions you find helpful in reflecting on your experiences learning and using English.

#### Guiding Questions

What was the experience of studying English like for you? (Describe the experience of living in another country to study English).

Write about any ways in which the process of learning English has changed you.

Describe the experiences of using English you had when you first moved to your country of service. (In which situations did you use English?)

How do you feel when you speak English in your country of service? Can you think of any specific experiences/examples?

Write about the leadership situations in which you use English.

What are the best times and most challenging times you have experienced using English as a leader?

Have there been any incidents that have been particularly important for you as a leader when using English?

Describe the contexts in which you communicate internationally in English.

Recount any specific situations that you remember.

What impact does using English have on your family?

## **Appendix D**

### **Interview Schedule**

**These interview questions will be used for participants currently studying English as part of their training. Possible probe questions are in italics.**

What is the experience of studying English like for you?

- *What do you hope to achieve when you were learning English?*
- *How do your expectations affect what you learn?*
- *Can you think of any examples to illustrate your answer?*

Write about any ways in which the process of learning English has changed you.

Describe the experience of living in another country to study English.

- *Why did you choose to learn English in another country?*
- *How did you feel about learning English in a new country?*
- *In what ways did the experience affect your family?*

How do you feel relating to people in English?

Describe any challenges you face learning English.

What does it take to learn and use English well?